Hugh Cecil Earl of Lonsdale.

280 The Sporting World. By Harry Hieover [Charles Brindley]. London. 1858.

8vo. 261 pp. M., 7 in. by 4¼ in.

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THE SPORTING WORLD.

BY

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LONDON:

T. C. NEWBY, PUBLISHER, 30, WELBECK STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.

1858.

THE

SPORTING WORLD.

CHAPTER I.

LIBERALITY and reason must admit there are many persons in the world that we must neither censure or blame for thinking ill of the Sporting World, neither must we be surprised at their so doing. Persons of the lower class, all but universally do this. I allude to London people, to tradesmen, and their families, and others ranking in the same orders of society. They know literally nothing of sportsmen, their pursuits or habits; never having had the opportunity of seeing either, still less have they had a chance of

getting even a glimpse of their society. The most they can know of the Sporting World—and this amounts to knowing nothing—is from the description given by some apprentice, or peradventure by their own son occasionally breaking loose and visiting some place of low resort by Sporting Characters; of such, if he dare speak, he can only report scenes and persons by which his hearers judge, erroneously of course, of the pursuits and habits of the Sporting World; for it never enters their heads that a sportsman would no more habitually visit such places, than he would accept from themselves an invitation to dinner.

I think I may say, I never heard a woman of such class, or some ranking far higher, who, if a London bred one, could bear the name of a Sportsman; for both are alike ignorant of what he really is. The sole idea of a woman of the class alluded to, of what the pursuits of a man ought to be, is his attending all day to his

shop or other avocations, occasionally taking her to the play when they can get orders. Going to dine at Richmond or some such place on a Sunday with friends of the same class, and sometimes inviting or going to the houses of similar persons, all thinking precisely like themselves. Such persons seldom read, if they do they judge of the Sportsman by such books as "Peregrine Pickle," which probably they read in early life, they only see what many Sportsmen were in days long gone by, or are guided by opinions formed and handed down by their parents, and religiously fostered by themselves. It will be found that their erroneous opinions are constantly kept alive by their female friends indulging in remarks not very far from the following.

"God defend me from a Sportsman for my "Husband. I am truly thankful Mr.———— "has no taste that way, if he had, a pretty life "I and the family should have of it, there would "be getting up at God knows what hour, by

"candle-light, to get him hot water to shave and "his breakfast. Then when he has disturbed the "whole family, off he goes to join his brother "sportsmen, as he calls them, who ride whoop- "ing and hallooing all over the country, breaking "down farmers' fences, riding over their wheat "and destroying it; and then, if the poor man "dares to complain, they one and all set their "face against him for doing so, because it is "done forsooth in sporting. Then my gentleman "comes home and entertains his wife with an "account of the run, as he calls it, if he has "had good sport; if not he is cross, nothing "can be done to please him, and he walks off "to bed, or if not, he goes to sleep in his "chair, either of which cases are vastly agreeable "to his wife; in the latter instance, she and all the "family must set mum for fear of disturbing "him, unless, indeed, he brings some companion "home with him, then they are noisy enough "talking over the day's sport, talking of how

"such a one rode, or speaking of some one who "got a fall, at which any one with proper "feeling would shudder to hear of, they laugh at "it, and speak of it as a "purler," or some "such detestable low term; this they carry on "all the evening, instead of making up a nice "little rubber, which could easily be done, for "if none of the family could make up a fourth, "his wife could easily get in some friend, who "would be but too happy to come in and spend "a cheerful evening. Faugh, Sportsmen, God "defend me from a Sportsman."

This is very much like the representations made, and believed to be correct among the class of London women we have particularised. The young Miss of the same coterie indulges in similar ideas, which she has no incentive to correct, seeing that all the "nice young men" with whom she is acquainted, know nothing about Sporting, or Sportsmen; unless some one among them, thinking to "do it stylish," talks, as they think,

quite knowingly about the Derby; for which the father of Miss eventually forbids him the house, and between ourselves is wise in doing so; for what have Notaries' Public Clerks, Tradesmens' Clerks, or any clerks to do with Derbies or Legers, they cannot get among gentlemen to carry on their Sporting propensities, if they have any, consequently they can only mix with those who would as surely rob them as would the Embryo Notary Public be sure to note the Bill of the Gentleman, if not paid to the hour.

But, to return to the female portions of such class. Now gallantry forfend that I should commit the wretched taste of ranking the estimation in which we hold horses and dogs, on the same line as that in which we estimate the fair sex; albeit, the one I have represented, as describing the doings of us Sportsmen, does not deserve any great courtesy at our hands; but, be it borne in mind it is her ignorance tha causes the offence—if offence it be—and as we

are not going to marry her, if she happens to be a pretty woman, her smiles may, *for the time being*, amply repay us for a little treachery to our clique, if we pretend to yield to her opinions, as she may in such case admit that ALL Sportsmen are not the savages she held them; if we thus gain her smiles, *for the time being*, it would be all we wish.

I am quite willing to give women credit for not usually interfering with men's amusements or pursuits, if proper ones and taken in moderation, but however moderate may be a man's horse pursuits, very many women loudly protest against them; there seems an actual jealousy of the animals. Now the jealousy is this, the lady would be the last to pay herself so bad a compliment as to suppose her husband could rank horses and dogs with herself; no, the jealousy is not this, it is, that sporting animals in no way contribute to her individual amusement, and she thinks he has no right to spend any portion of his

income in any thing that does not; and he would find in the generality of cases, that supposing him to have a thousand a year, and is taken with a girl his inferior in position as to society, and without a farthing to bless herself with, he will find her as loud in her protestations against his keeping his three or four hunters to which he has been accustomed, as if five hundred out of the ten was the lady's portion; nay, in all probability far more so than the woman of family, who has been in the habit of seeing some members of that family Sportsmen, she is accustomed to see Sporting pursuits as one of the items of expenditure, connected with that of dinners, dress, and servants, and grows from habit to consider it one of the natural pursuits of man. A learned man, her good sense and good taste would lead her to appreciate; and an accomplished one, the same refined taste would induce her to admire; but the kid gloved nice young man, without the

manly bearing of the Sportsman, had far better not come within reach of her playful and lady-like sarcasm, though the admired of young ladies of the third or fourth classes of society.

I have frequently detected a young lady of the portionless part of the fair community, speaking to her confidents, forestalling her amusements, luxuries, and (to be) pursuits, by actually in prospectu, laying out her husband's income. "She would get him to leave off hunting, and "sell those odious pointers and setters, that "were of no use, but cost as much in keeping "one month as would supply game for the "family for a year." It is not to be wondered at that she has no idea of Sporting or a Sportsman, her position and that of her father, who, happy man (query) with seven children, and exactly half as many hundreds to keep them on, has prevented her from seeing one or the other; but then he has his pleasures (query) on being constantly congratulated and complimented on

his seven wonders of the world, by some maiden lady, a former schoolfellow of his wife's, who sticks to them like a bur for the three days' convenience of their tea and toast, saying nothing of a friendly dropping in on other days, just half-an-hour before dinner, knowing that dear Sophy or dear Charley has a cold; if the wife has the slightest touch of head-ache she takes possession of the house, installing herself as nurse gratuituously, for which the husband is expected to be most grateful in having a tenth inmate; then the my dearing, and dear Marying, and various the reciprocating Susaning to each other as they did twenty years back, recals to the husband's mind that it is in another way rather a dear bargain the keeping the lady when she was in no way wanting. Now to expect that to all these agrèmens he is to add Field Sports would be quite unreasonable, it would be taxing the beneficence of Fate too much. So the young lady we suppose to be on

the eve of marriage, who is the daughter of the above stated father, conceives that with the plan she has laid out of parties, public places, and entertaining her former friends frequently, and her relations perpetually, for her husband, in addition to such amusements, to entertain any ideas of Field Sports would be as preposterous as it would have been in her father's case.

Doubtless the young lady is vastly kind in thus liberally appropriating an income in prospectu; but, as the dislike of Field Sport and Sportsmen have grown with her growth, or rather the knowing nothing of either has, so the propensity of following such pursuit has perhaps become fixed with the Husband in prospectu, and he may not hold the gaining her a compensation for the foregoing every thing he has been accustomed to consider the primum mobile of all his pleasurable sensations, or at all events chiefly so; he has honesty enough to tell her this or something like it, and she

vanity enough to say to herself "we will see."

Perhaps this digression may to some persons appear singular if not out of place, but I make it, to convince a certain clique that their animadversions against Sporting and Sportsmen only recoil on themselves as indicative of low life, or at all events the reverse of high life.

Doubtless, a woman living on, say three hundred a year, in a thirty pound rented house in Walworth, or one living in lodgings in Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, would exclaim loudly against any woman of fashion and fortune, if she heard the latter was a good judge of a horse; doubtless she would consider her being so as unfeminine, and a kind of knowledge disgraceful for a lady to possess. Let us see into this, now in saying the Marchioness of ——, is a good judge of horses, no one in his or her senses could suppose for a moment a woman of fashion feeling a horse's legs to ascertain his soundness; probably she does not know the name of a curb, or if she has

heard of it as a source of lameness, she would not know, (unless shown its existence on her favourite riding horse,) whether a curb appears on the back-part of the hind leg or the front of the fore one; her knowledge is simply this—she has been accustomed to use, and see used by her friends fine or pretty animals, thus her eye becomes capable of detecting such as are or are not so; but we will admit that sympathy for a favourite might induce her to put her hand on that favorite's leg when shown the injury. I can see nothing unfeminine in this, or any thing half as distasteful to the touch in a live horse's leg, as there is in a raw stake cut off a dead bullock; the probability is her ladyship never touched a raw stake in her existence, the other does these kind of things every day, and as probably if purchasing a very fine bullock's heart, the butcher offers her to feel its weight, saying "that art is a good height pound if it's a hounce, feel it marm," whether the good lady's

house-keeping thrift induces her to do so is all chance. If such persons would only consider, or rather if they knew the conclusions likely to be drawn from what they say by any one accustomed to a different grade, they would hold their tongues and not give opinions on subjects of which they can know nothing.

Now the male part of the creation, moving in the same class of society and action, have a far more defensible excuse for any objections they may entertain towards Field Sports and Sportsmen. They are aware that Field Sports are more or less expensive, they are equally aware that Sportsmen look with no favourable eye towards Agents, Managing Clerks, to Attornies, ditto Notaries Public, ditto Merchants' Clerks, ditto Stock Brokers, and ditto tradesmen; in one or other of which employments we may suppose the husband of the *Lady* (not Gentlewoman,) who expressed herself to be so grateful that Mr. ——, her husband, had no tendency to Field Sports.

The husband also knows that Field Sports seldom require the services of an Agent, bring nothing to the Lawyer's office, unless peradventure it be the Sportsman himself, sorely against his will. In themselves Sporting pursuits if prudently followed produce no bill transactions, though "miserabile dictu," when the reverse conduct is pursued they frequently do. A man having some hundreds of acres as hereditary property, creates no items in the Merchant's Ledger. Selling live stock creates none of the advantages to the City "jobber," that speculations in change effect; and lastly, all transactions with tradesmen of a general kind, are only resorted to by the Sportsman as matters of necessity, while he invariably regrets being compelled to apply to the "counter," the "covert" not furnishing all he wants in the necessaries of life.

It is equally politic and natural that a parent of such grade should check any sporting propensity in his offspring, he would neither have time,

opportunity, or the chance given him of getting among gentlemen to carry it out, and mixing with low Sporting characters would be the high road to ruin. His father's till or cash box probably paying turnpikes and expenses in his ineligible route. All must quite coincide with such youngster's father in holding him far better employed in the counting-house or shop.

Thus, with all my Sporting predilections on my head, I am not unjust enough to feel my ire raised when I hear certain men reprobate them. I hold it hard enough that fate has placed them in positions with which Sporting is incompatable. It would be hard to deny them the gratifications (if gratification they find it,) to bless their stars they are not Sportsmen.

It will be observed that I have made the foregoing observations only on persons whose finances and occupations are such, and the time they are obliged daily to apply themselves to business, such as to preclude the possibility of

their devoting the short time they have for recreation to any thing bordering on Field Sports; habit becomes second nature, they have their *agrèmens*, the Marquis of Waterford can have no more, and though there is as wide a difference in the amusements and pursuits of the two, as we may infer there is in the men, each is satisfied. So in language now obsolete, we may say, "all right."

The great error of persons is, each finds fault with what the other does if the act of the one differs from that of the other; nothing can be so preposterous. The Noble Marquis is quite in place at a meet of his fox hounds, and doubly so if the meet happens to be near the hospitable portals of Curraghmore. The City Man quite in place at the Cock in Fleet Street, sipping his grog, talking over the scarceness of money, or, let us be particular in technicalities, the "tightness" of the money market, or the few or large imports, as the case may be, of Russian Tallow; the absurdity would be in the

Marquis shewing at the Cock, or any other place frequented by men of business, and one of those exhibiting at Curraghmore.

People all seem to wish to bring other persons to their own way of thinking; nothing can be more absurd. Personally, I am most anxious to do that which my friends approve, and equally desirous of avoiding that which may call forth their censure. I may not be very successful in my endeavours in this case, but I have at least the negative merit of the wish to do both; be that as it may, I rarely attempt to bring persons to my opinion. In the first place, in nineteen cases in twenty I should fail, even with those in whom I take a lively interest; and for those in whom I feel little or none I am not disposed to interfere, but let every man go to ———, wherever he pleases, or can get his own way; all argument or reasoning is useless where to convince it requires one person to see with the eyes of another.

I could no more convince a Sailor that going to Brighton by a four-in-hand was as pleasant (unless it was for the novelty of it) as going to Spithead by a vessel, than I could fly. As to any merit in the coachmanship, that would all (in his mind) depend on how many "knots an hour she went," and the greatest pleasure we could afford him would be permission to stand on the roof, (alias deck) and huzza to the persons we passed. He would hurrah if on the road we encountered a pack of Fox Hounds in full cry near it; so he would if a flock of Sheep took fright and the Shepherd in full pursuit of them, he would probably think the latter event produced the most fun; he would hurrah at a race as the horses passed him, but would turn on his heel before its finish, though Alfred Day, Sim Templeman, and Job Marson were shewing finished jockeyship in a "set to," as I should probably do if the Clipper Yachts True Briton and America

were going bowsprit to bowsprit (or whatever the technical term may be) half under water nearing the goal.

I have said that I have only particularized persons having only a certain amount of money at their disposal as those most prone to carp at pursuits their means and habits did not enable them to enjoy, and have instanced their probable business occupations; but the thing changes where large means exist though the occupation may be the same. Doubtless such occupations in a general way are at variance with Sporting pursuits, but where the means exist the tendency sometimes exists also, and in full force. I have known, though not often, most enthusiastic Sportsmen among men who would, and could, steal a day or two in the week from Mincing Lane, and who if their interest did not prevent it would be far oftener seen at Chepstead Church in Surrey, or the Dog and Partridge at Stifford in Essex, than in Lombard Street.

Such men have no Cock in Fleet Street habits with them, and their good wives, so far from grudging her husband his brace of hunters, is happy to see him enjoy a recreation she knows conduces to his health, and enables him to pursue with increased zeal the business that brings comfort and affluence to her and her family. She does not "thank God that her husband has no Sporting propensities," but like a fine-minded generous woman, thanks Fate that has given him the means and Providence that has awarded him health to enjoy them. Such a man need not fear a welcome from those assembled at the cover side; he is hailed as a Sportsman when known, and his dealing in ropes, canvass, or coffee, is set down in liberal minds merely as a chance or Fate, under which one man deals in such commodity, another in agricultural produce, and a third, lucky wight, has a fortune by inheritance. His wife, though from the conventual forms of society is debarred

from mixing with the aristocracy, perhaps sets a bright example it will be well for her equals to follow, and for her superiors to imitate.

The very learned may hold Field Sports as somewhat trifling pursuits when compared with their profounder studies; but the same good sense that enables them to dive into the occult mysteries of science, will tell them that an equal portion of sound sense may exist in the head of the country gentlemen, as in his who devotes his time and energies to the abstruse study of ethereal contemplation, or the mysteries of natural causes and effects.

CHAPTER II.

We cannot be surprised at a man, having his bread to get, with a family at present depending on his exertions for their support, and who have no other prospect, depending on their own in after life for the same end, totally objecting to his sons imbibing sporting ideas; for if even they havn sense enough to keep out of harm's way and dangerous acquaintance, ideas so totally at variance with their usual habits and pursuits, to say the least, "unhinges them," and causes them to think their general occupation more than usually dull and monotonous. A man thus situated very wisely objects to any sporting habits or ideas on the part of his sons. I cannot but applaud his prudence.

If the son of such a father shewed strong and irresistible propensity to the sea; was spending every leisure hour about shipping, and chose his acquaintance among Nautical men; though the father might regret the propensity, and fondly wish his son to stay at home, and follow the business of his predecessors. If his turn was otherwise, in following the bent of his inclinations he might succeed and turn it to profitable account. But we cannot disguise the fact, Field Sports are either the amusement of the more or less wealthy, or the employ of the menial. There is unfortunately no medium in a general way. I am quite ready to admit that when coaches were going, a respectable coachman was as respectable a man as many who earned their bread in other ways, and by certain men thought a great deal more of; huntsmen are in the same position, so are jockies and trainers. A certain part of the community, high and low, will think Alfred Day the jockey in a very

superior station to a clerk in a lawyer's office, the lawyer's clerk will think he has something of the gentleman to boast of in his employ and would look down on Alfred Day. The gentleman would laugh at either of them pretending to such character, but he would talk to Alfred, while probably the only notice he would take of the other, would be the asking if Mr. ——, (his employer) was at home, or whether some document he had left was copied.

It is thus so throughout the world, each man thinks in accordance with the way in which he has been brought up. No one can be surprised at any one eulogising what he knows how to appreciate. We have only reason to censure those who ignorantly and blindly condemn what they really know nothing at all about, and as each party seeks society among those they think likely to be of their way of thinking, of course their sentiments and opinions pass current among themselves and are held as impregnable.

I know not whether I shall get in bad odour with my brother sportsmen from what I am going to say, but truth and candour impel me to confess, that supposing I had a son who depended on place or profession for his income, the utmost extent of knowledge in horse matters I would wish him to possess, would be the being able to ride a horse, if he had occasion to do so, well enough not to make himself ridiculous or conspicuous; any further knowledge would be of no use to him. I am on the other hand one quite disposed, with a son born to an inheritance that would enable him in after life to follow and enjoy Field Sports, to put the boy on horseback as soon, or perhaps before he could walk; to introduce him into the hunting field as soon as I found he could sit a horse or pony, and should be proud to see him "blooded" with the first fox he had seen killed, as I was when only seven years old; would initiate him, to the best of my abilities, in all the

arcana of Field Sports, would teach him to take four horses in hand with as much ease and little fuss as one pony in a basket park chair. I would have him a first-rate shot; this I must depute some other person to make him, not being by any means one myself, though probably Swallows would say I was. I could in no way object to his being an angler, though I cannot suppose a boy brought up by me would desire to become one.

Of the various other sporting propensities in which I might be able to give him as good instructions as most men, I would say nothing, lest I inculcated in him a zest for what I freely confess the mixing in never did me any good, involved considerable expense, and all for what? Why, for becoming a judge of things and pursuits, that would have been far more "honoured in the breach than the performance of." I should however, glory in seeing him in all fair sportsman-like pursuits, show that the desire

to enjoy them had not derogated with me and was not likely to do so with him. Fate, however, willed otherwise. I have had no son to live beyond infancy. I am the last male of my family, and the last of my name; a Frankenstein on earth. Well, well, be it so, "*Chacun a Son Tour,*" I have had mine. It has at least furnished my humble pen with a theme wherein to embody past scenes, past feelings, and past pleasures. I draw on a fund of experience and incident. Let me hope this is sometimes brought forward with utility to some, perchance with amusement to others; when my store is exhausted, I am quite willing, like many of the impressions and circumstances I record, to become as them, a thing passed, but not perhaps like them, remembered.

But no more of this prosing. Turn we to topics more german to the present purpose; our peroration has been chiefly on the opinions certain persons entertain of Field Sports and

Sportsmen. Let us now see what Sportsmen think of each other, which is a matter of some interest to them, whereas the opinion of persons they are never likely to mix or converse with must be a matter of no interest at all.

I have said that unless a boy had the prospect of sufficient inheritance to enable him to pursue them, I should hold it to be both to his interest and happiness to know nothing at all about them. Some persons may say—why can he not enjoy them with moderation, for which a moderate income, no matter from what derived, will suffice? My reply to that is, we all know total abstinence is far easier than moderation, and the young one must be a cold-blooded one, if in getting one day in the weeks' fox hunting, he does not wish for three or four, and I should say that "Tare and Tret," "Consols and Long Annuities," or poring over the dry opinions of counsel for a client's benefit, must be doubly irksome after the animating scene of a find in a favourite Fox Cover.

But apart from this tendency, I cannot in accordance with my individual feelings but hold the axiom to be good that says "whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well." I do not mean to infer by the quotation that because a man cannot keep up a stud of twelve, ten, or six hunters he is not to indulge in his favorite pursuit; we are not all born to, or arrive at, a large fortune, so if a man cannot have the luxury of a large stud he must content himself with what he can get. But I fear I shall not have credit for the bump of venery being very strongly developed in me, when I admit that if I lived in the country, (which under the circumstances I am about to state I certainly should not do) that is with one horse and perhaps a pony for my wife's use in harness, I should not, as many persons would do, take a day's hunting occasionally. I would avoid the tongue of a foxhound as I would avoid any thing that reminded me of happier

days, by which the present ones were only rendered the more painful. There are men who so situated would borrow the pony and get a little hunting with any Beagles that perchance might be kept in the neighbourhood, and would ride the horse to see the Foxhounds another day in the week, if peradventure they came so often within reach; and "here's Mr. ——— on his BAY horse," would tell the sad tale that he had no other. Far happier and in sooth far wiser would be that man than I. But I hope I might be permitted to make myself miserable my own way, and stay at home. The man who avails himself of the means in his power and got his hunting as he could would I grant shew himself the truer Sportsman at heart, and no one could doubt his "amor venery." No one could doubt the London man's love of dramatic performance, who was content in the absence of the well appointed chariot to take his wife under his arm, and

with clogs to protect the lower extremities, and an umbrella to protect the upper ones, could trot off a mile-and-a-half to Drury Lane Theatre. But could Garrack, Kemble, Keen, Mrs. Siddons, and Miss O'Neil all play together, I would not endure the mortification of the thus going, for the great treat such an assemblage of talent would be when I got there. But as in the other supposed case, I repeat happier, and perhaps wiser, would be the man who would.

There are men who can be content to shoot three days a week with a pottering old Pointer; nor is it at all improbable such a Sportsman may bag as much game during the season as he who with his leash of high ranging Setters, or Pointers, with a relay, can boast during the months he devotes to grouse and partridge; but the first is at best mere altogether pottering, which I loathe in any way.

Some persons may say "this is all pride and vanity," I admit there is a good deal of both

in such conduct, but not ALL. As well might it be said that it was something like this, if in the absence of chess and billiards I declined playing all fours, and pitch and toss; for it matters little whether we cannot be amused by an inferior game, or whether if we pursue the superior one we are forced to partake of it in an inferior way, both are repellant to the ideas and habits of him who has enjoyed superior amusement, and that partaken of, if not with èclat, at least with credit.

To attempt to designate the different individuals, who either in their own or other persons' estimation come under the denomination of the Sporting World, would be an almost endless task, and then leave that task incomplete; for be it observed, the Sportsman and the Sporting man "id est" one of the Sporting World, are distinct and often quite opposite characters.

To particularise, we should not describe such

men as Messrs. Hugo Meynell, Musters, Farquarson, and others of like standing and characters as Sporting men; we should not do sufficient justice to them in so doing; while, on the other hand, to call such men as the late Crockford, Bond, and the never to be forgotten or forgiven Palmer, Sportsmen, would be insult to the names of those forming the beau ideal of the character of the Sportsman. Of course I speak generally, for I am acquainted with men who though Sporting men and not Sportsmen, I have every reason to believe are individually men of unimpeachable honour and integrity. What I have said merely shews the two characters to be different—different generally in habits and pursuits, and certainly very often in the estimation due to each.

I will endeavour to specify the two distinct characters under separate heads: viz. Legitimate and True Sportsmen, and Sporting Characters. In doing this I suppose each in a general way

to act up to the character; but as may be supposed, among a variety of men actuated by a variety of tastes and opinions, there must be cases in which the two characters are so blended that it is somewhat difficult to determine where each o'er steps the line of demarcation between the characters, or to determine where the one ceases and the other begins. I suppose however in the following list each to act distinctly up to his character:—

TRUE SPORTSMEN.

The Fox and Hare Hunter.

The Owner of Race Horses.

The Courser.

The Shot.

The Fly Fisher.

SPORTING CHARACTERS.

The Stag Hunter.

The Owner of Race Horses who is at the same time a Leg.

The Better.

The Steeple Chaser.

The Match Maker against Time.

The Pedestrian.

The Pigeon and Wager Shot.

Owners and Feeders of Game-Cocks.

The Fancy, comprising a variety of characters.

An awful array truly of spurious against legitimate sporting. But let us recollect that although we may condemn some of these pursuits as not being to the taste of the true Sportsman, we must not pass wholesale condemnation on those pursuing them. And even in those that we can but regard with unmitigated reprobation, though the pursuit may in itself be of a nature to merit this, we must not set

down every man mixing in such as indiscriminately a savage and a blackguard. Some, nay most, of the pursuits I condemn may be low; but the man mixing in them may not be to be despised. For instance, the Cabman cannot of course keep his hunters or hunt, but having the germ of Sporting strongly in him, he does keep his rat killing Terrier, and perhaps glories as much in his achievements at Jemmy Shaw's in Windmill Street, as Martin Hawke did in those of Bright Phœbus, Captain Ross in those of Clinker, or Lord Howth when steering the Sea; and between ourselves, there is nothing more reprehensible or cruel in killing rats than foxes. Fox hunting most probably has ever been so totally beyond any probable means of the owner of the rat terrier that he has never given it a thought, but his favourite "Wonder" he can manage to keep, and it would be hard to deprive him of his pursuit because he cannot enjoy better.

When I admitted I should only derive mortification in the place of enjoyment if I hunted the one horse and pony I have supposed any one to possess, it was because I should feel myself in a state of most unmistakeable inferiority while so doing. But Cabby does what he does do *well*, his pet does the same, so there is no mortification in his case; there would be for the man who had only a cur that took ten minutes to kill a rat, that the other would only take one gripe at, a shake, and then leave him as dead as a door-nail. I can fancy I hear Cabby remark to the owner of the cur, "A wery nice little Tyke that of yourn, but rather slow; hope you've more of the breed at home." I should not expect to hear any illiberal or derisive remark on the ONE horse from men I might meet in the hunting field. But while I was pottering along on a forty pound hack, "par excellence" for the time being a hunter, if I saw some fortunate being sail

away by me on a horse of a hundred and fifty guinea stamp, I might make a quotation in a different sense to that in which it passes current and say, "Sic transit gloria mundi," and sighing say to myself, that is the way a man should be carried if he hunts at all.

But it is time to allude to the attributes of the different characters I have specified as legitimate sportsmen, and sporting characters, and see how they estimate themselves, and (what is of far more consequence) how they are estimated by others.

First in importance comes the Master of Foxhounds, it would not read technical to say owner, though we apply the latter term to any one keeping racehorses. It is however the owner and consequently master of foxhounds we particularise here. I can hardly conceive a man in a more enviable situation. His fortune must of course be large to enable him to hold the position he does in making, we will say, eighteen

hundred a year one item in his expenditure. He has the good will and thanks of all the aristocracy and others who can afford to hunt, as being the means of affording them what many of those consider as their greatest enjoyment and delight. He has, or at least deserves to have, the gratitude of numbers of persons employed directly or indirectly about this part of his establishment. He encourages farmers by consuming their produce, and probably, if they are breeders of horses, by buying their colts to an extent that makes the little damage sometimes done by breaking their fences a mere bagatelle. A fishmonger's wife of Shoreditch or Whitechapel may cry out "Shame to destroy other peoples' property, and waste food for Christians to eat, by riding over it." Let her superintend the scaling and cleaning of her husband's fish, but not let her tongue run in speaking of matters of which she can know no more about than she does of the habits of the

Anthropophagi, of whom probably she never heard. Now, the poorest farmer seldom complains of suffering from a pack of foxhounds in his neighbourhood, for the moment any damage is represented he is amply reimbursed, and is often a gainer by the circumstance.

But we are not to admit, as many imagine, the foxhunter returns home so jaded and fatigued that the moment he has had his dinner he falls asleep in his chair, and with short intervals continues to do so for the evening. No, no; foxhunting has now become short, sharp, and decisive. The master often gets home by three o'clock, and after the luxury of ablution in a warm or cold bath, dresses for dinner, then feels as alert as he did when he met his hounds at the covert side at half-past ten or eleven. Probably in the drawing-room he finds some invited guests. To such of the male sex as he may know would be interested by the subject, he states the events of the morning, in

short, "what we did." While to the ladies he is as much "au fait" on subjects that he knows are pleasing to them as any man in the room; nay, informs any of them who have not seen the last arrived paper, as he had probably done at breakfast, of the (to them) important fact that on a certain occasion the Queen wore a drawn silk bonnet with a mantilla of some commodity which they perfectly understand, but the name of which he, to their infinite amusement, sadly mutilates. Dinner ended and the ladies retired, he ventures a little on subjects forbidden as a matter of course in their presence, the bottle passes cheerfully and quickly round, for as foxhunting is not now the business of an unlimited number of hours, neither is sitting at table. Music for the young, whist for the middle aged and old, with probably a chess table for the more studious minded, show that foxhunters know how things should be done in their houses far better than did their ancestors, and sooth

to say, far better in their kennels also in many respects.

This will be found to be about the usual bearing of the present owners of a pack of fox-hounds. Of course there are exceptions, but these will be found to be few, and may generally be traced to causes that do not admit of surprise when they are so. The man who was innately and from his earliest habits coarse, vulgar, or depraved, would be just the same, place him in what position you will.

CHAPTER III.

We have now seen the foxhunter on hunting days, say three days a week, let us now look at him on the remaining four. There are men who go into a country for the sole purpose of hunting, and having there nothing else to do, and their means affording the necessary appliances for so doing, hunt every day in the week; but this is rarely found to be the case with men who keep foxhounds. They may occasionally go to a fixture to meet a pack hunting an adjacent county or a distant part of the same. This is done more in compliment to a brother master of hounds than from any other reason; for a man of wealth and importance in his county, which we suppose the man to be who keeps foxhounds, is not like the man who I have

stated hunts every day having nothing else to do. His position involves many duties.

He is probably a magistrate if an untitled member of the aristocracy, so he may be said to have the surveillance of all around him, which if he conscientiously discharges his duty occupies much of his time. His own affairs, if he properly looks after them, will leave him nothing to complain of on the score of want of occupation for mind and body; and further, the doing or neglecting to do this will probably just make the difference between handing down an estate unincumbered to his heir, or immolating a fine property and leaving little but his name for his inheritance.

He, independent of his magisterial duties (if he has such), cheerfully encounters the trouble of becoming referee in any dispute between his neighbours, rich or poor; and it is rarely that the advice or opinions of such a man fails to produce amicable settlement of

matters, that if decided by law would probably end in the ruin or lasting inconvenience of the beaten party, and much loss even to the successful one. The interference of such a man often restores an idle or dissolute son to his parents, and a neglectful husband to his wife and family. For where the sense of shame is not totally lost, the mild reproof and representations of their conduct, made by a man they cannot but respect, will often produce what all his powers as a magistrate would fail to effect. The sway such a man has over the minds of his poorer neighbours, if not irreclaimably depraved, is little understood. They know he is influenced by no interest but their good, and the hardest heart often yields to such convictions. His utility in a county is invaluable.

Such a man mostly keeps a part of his estates in his own hands and cultivates them as an agriculturist, with a view to profit, amusement, or experiment; his large means enable him

to do this, for in a financial point of view it matters little to him whether the hundred acres he devotes to experiments are profitable or the reverse. Less gifted agriculturists are sure to profit by his experiments, either in their adoption if found advantageous, or rejecting them if found useless or unprofitable. Thus at his expense are perhaps a hundred farmers instructed in matters that but for him they would never have dreamt of.

It is true all men are not thus serviceable to others, or disposed to be so, but let not this be attributed, as by many persons it is, to their thoughts being engrossed by their hounds and field sports; as I stated, the vulgar or depraved man would be the same place him in what situation you may, so the man uninfluenced by any desire of contributing a part of his time and resources towards the benefit of others would be the same useless being placed in any position in life.

We must not expect such exertions for the benefit of others from very young men, but such are not often placed in a situation to accord it. Few young men though they may on coming of age come into a certain sum, large or small as the case may be, still it does not often happen that a son at that age comes into possession of the family estate and appendages, for probably when the son is twenty-one, the father is but forty-five. Thus we seldom see a young man just come of age a master of foxhounds and called upon to perform the various duties filled by a man of maturer age. It is well for others that it is so, for the various ways in which I have stated a man of weight in point of property may be, and frequently is, of the greatest service in his county, would be unattended to by the younger representative; I will state my reasons for inferring that they would be so.

There are two ages in which numbers of mankind are more or less selfish, or at all

events act selfishly. The very young and the very old. But they thus act from the influence of different causes. In the young man it proceeds (let us hope) mostly from want of thought, added to which is his love of pleasure and display, both which in the young are perfectly insatiate. It matters not whether his income is three hundred, three thousand, thirty, or twice that sum, so long as a wish is ungratified or fancy unachieved; or so long as one mortal can boast the possession of what the other has not, or make a display the other has not done; the mines of Golconda would not suffice to gratify his love of pleasure and show; I cannot use a stronger term than I have in saying that love of pleasure is insatiate. I do not mean to infer that he is insensible to the wants or feelings of others, or that so far as their wants went he would be niggard in relieving them; doubtless this he occasionally does, and that with, in many cases, uncalled for munificence, but he would not

take one hour from those devoted to pleasure for any purpose, however laudable or urgent it might be. Consequently he gives a fifty pound note to save himself the trouble of enquiry, and gratifies his sheer vanity in a case where perhaps ten pounds would have sufficed, and the other forty have brought relief and comfort to the hearth of four other deserving persons. Am I wrong in saying that man is selfish who will not deprive himself of a moment's self-gratification, and that a gratification in no way commendable, for the benefit of any living being? The anxieties and necessities of others *occasionally* flit before his recollection or observation, but the love of self is *ever* before his eyes. And with a mind thus constituted, and so constituted are the minds of most young men, we can only deplore not wonder that he listens to the never ceasing demands made by his self-indulgent propensities.

Old age becomes selfish or rather ceases to feel for others from two leading causes. Many

acts of kindness have probably been repaid by ingratitude, and many of what people are apt to call misfortunes have been found to have been the mere natural result of folly, extravagance, and perhaps depravity; thus the feelings become hardened to similar representations, and thus with apparent churlish indifference hear of, or see the deprivations of others with stoical apathy.

Another cause is, there is a time of life when the amusements, the pleasures, and vanities of life lose their hold on the mind. At thirty if a man hears that another has lost the means of mixing with the fashionable world, and indulging in luxurious habits, he has his sincere commiseration, nay, he probably in some way or other, by personal exertion of interest or money, alleviates the blow. He feels that the other being obliged to give up his parties, his dinners, his equipages, and the various acts and pursuits that are necessary to keep his place among the fashionable and luxurious, must be the direst

misfortune that can happen to men. Not so after a certain age; such things have lost their influence, and the man at that time of life must not be held totally devoid of feeling from entertaining the idea, that so long as a man has enough for actual personal comfort he has no right to expect others to exert themselves to reinstate him in his former position.

Thus I should say it is only in men of middle age that we usually find that discreet yet liberal state of mind that renders them of such paramount benefit in a county. They are just of an age to reflect, and, having reflected, to act; they are of an age not to be misled by undue predominence of passion or prejudice. But to judge dispassionately, to be guided by right, and to act with prudence, though sometimes waiving that more or less, at the pleasure of liberality and consideration for the feelings incident to human kind. Such is precisely the sort of man I would wish to see the owner of a pack of

foxhounds; and indeed the owner of every and any thing his heart could wish.

Let us now look at his conduct in the field, we have seen what it is in his own house, and supposed what it would be likely to be among his neighbours. Nay cavil not ye sons of aristocracy and wealth at the somewhat familiar (and if you please so to call it) levelling term, neighbours; the man of high mind holds every man such who does not o'erstep the line between himself and his superiors, and whose conduct entitles him to be so called.

But hie we to the field. As a matter of courtesy to the gentlemen forming his hunt the master makes it a point to be always in time. Should any unforeseen circumstance have occasioned his being a few minutes behind time, he says on coming up, "I beg your pardon, gentlemen, I was unavoidably detained by (stating the circumstance), but we will endeavour to

make you amends. "Put them in, Danger" or whatever his huntsman's name may be. Of course an apology so courteously offered (but which there are some few masters who would hold unnecessary) all hats are off, and he has added an item to the category of acts that have produced an universal feeling of respect and esteem from all present, or indeed absent.

The very young owner of hounds would probably not have done this. On the contrary he would at times be late from the feeling he had a right to be so, which of course no one can deny, he would have felt that an apology thus offered might be taken by farmers as including them. Mistaken youth, farmers are far too intelligent persons to take such apology to themselves, though they would fully appreciatethe courtesy that publicly made no distinction of persons.

We will suppose our owner of hounds acted up to his wish of making his friends amends for the trifling delay he had caused. They

tried a particularly favoured cover owned by a strict preserver of foxes, found "Pug at home," from which the pack somewhat uncourteously drove him, in fact told him "stand not on the order of your going but go at once." As soon as his white tipped brush was seen a field length from the covert, a Sportsman, who on his first appearance had said with expressive gesture, "Silence, for God's sake gentlemen," seeing him well off; canters his horse to where he had broke, and a clear Sporting "Tally ho away" from a well known voice that was to be trusted, caused the immediate appearance of the pack at the spot. Forward my beauties, and a wave of the cap or hat of the Sportsman caused them, catching the scent, to race heads up and sterns down, they give themselves no time for music, but stream away with a burning scent.

Our master, as we will infer he usually does, rode manfully to his hounds, his heart was with them.

And here, we will make a remark or two between the riding of such an experienced Sportsman as we suppose such owner to be, and that of a youthful one similarly situated.

Both perhaps when occasion called for it would ride equally bold, but the difference would be, the latter would always see or pretend to see occasion for it, the other would not. But if hounds were running hard and he saw any necessity for it he would put his at any fence it was practicable for a horse to jump; and this just the same if alone as if the eyes of the field were on him. If a gate was shut and there was time, the experienced and considerate Sportsman would call to any countryman, if such happened to be by and ask him to open it, the other if persons were by would probably d——n him for getting in the way if he attempted the same thing. The one rides for himself, and to watch his hounds, the other for those he fancies are watching him.

We will suppose a check. The sportsman looks on such event as to be expected at some time or other, patiently waits while hounds make their cast, and if that fails, while the huntsman makes his; then perhaps suggests a cast in another direction, which may succeed or not. If it does, "That's it," proclaims the lucky hit; if all fails, "I am afraid he has beat us," is the temperate remark on an unavoidable circumstance.

The other on such interruption to the only part of hunting he enjoys, namely the galloping and jumping, most likely d——s the foxhounds, and not unlikely the huntsman. If any but a crack country, d——s that also, as a pottering place only fit for a pack of harriers. "Cursed provoking," (he would say) "just as hounds were getting to their work and horses to their stride." This perhaps after a burst that had tested the merits of the best nags out, but he has got his second horse, and with fresh tools to work with, hopes to see another ten minutes

bring those less fortunately circumstanced to a fixture. This not proceeding from any ill-natured feeling towards others, to whom he has no earthly ill will, but to show off *himself*, towards whom all his complacent ideas are concentrated. He would wish all out to be as much amused and gratified as himself, but that they should vie with him in horses or horsemanship, is not to be borne, unless with some of the *élite*, some known crack riders; these he tolerates truly because he cannot help it.

Such a man as we represent the first to be, as a master of hounds, is respected and admired in the field as a sportsman, in the drawing-room as a gentleman, and both loved and respected in his neighbourhood as a kind landlord, and, where occasion presents itself, as a liberal benefactor. The young one is quite content so that he is admired, which he may be (or not) in the field and drawing room; one thing is quite certain he cannot conceive the

possibility of the elder being *admired* any where, though he will admit he is *respected* everywhere.

So much for supposed owners of foxhounds. Let us now turn to masters. Gentlemen filling this situation sometimes are actually owners of the pack, but this does not often occur. The hounds are usually the property of a committee, composed of the influential subscribers to the Hunt. The horses for the servants where the master does not hunt the hounds, are sometimes the same. When the master hunts the hounds he sometimes mounts his two whips. Of course whether hunting the hounds or not he mounts himself; I say of course, because it is rarely otherwise, in fact I only knew of one or two cases where it was so.

The consenting to hunt a country is influenced by many causes, and the terms on which a man undertakes it influences, in great measure, the manner of doing it. There are masters of hounds, men of fortune, who take up the

mastership rather than the country should be without a pack of hounds. Such men frequently do it on terms by which they are aware they must lose, but make this sacrifice to render themselves popular in their county. Such men have usually subscribed liberally to the hunt before, so on taking to the management they are not deterred by contemplated loss. Such men are usually of some standing in their county, and are perhaps, in some cases, next in consequence to an owner of hounds; by that term I mean to allude to a nobleman or gentleman keeping them without the aid of any subscription.

But all masters of hounds are not thus situated. There are men who like the thing and avoid subscription by taking the mastership; and others again, poorer men, undertake it at a specified amount, trusting to making a profitable speculation in so doing; a somewhat hazardous undertaking. A man may calculate, and calculate

well, all the necessary outgoings. He may know to a fraction what (we will say) thirty-five couples of hounds will cost keeping; may equally closely set down what the keep of the necessary number of horses for himself and men will amount to. He may make himself master of the very variable expense of earth stopping. All this he may do and may flatter himself a reasonable sum remains out of the promised subscriptions for his own time, trouble, and anxiety. This is all very well, but reminds me a good deal of the play of *The Rehearsal.* The author is supposed to be witnessing the rehearsal of his play, and he notices what he considers the different hits in it. Thus, on a particular reply being made, he observes to the manager, "then you see the audience will all laugh." "Yes," replied the manager, "but suppose the audience should NOT laugh."

Thus by the hounds if all goes well there would be the sum expected as a balance in

the master's favor, but suppose in this case as in the other, "the audience should not laugh," that is, the subscription should not be paid up, the balance would probably be on the wrong side of the book. Such things have occurred and possibly may again.

No man I should conceive could feel at his ease in taking the mastership of hounds, unless on any uncontemplated loss occurring, he can, without great inconvenience, meet such casualty from his own pocket. Hunts are usually liberal and in such a case would possibly make up the loss, but persons are not fond of paying other people's debts, so he has but one of two very unpleasant alternatives left,—to either dun a man or cause him to be dunned for his money, or lose it.

CHAPTER IV.

We now come to owners of a pack of harriers. Such are seldom kept but by those who can well afford it; there is not show and dash enough about the thing to induce the young and thoughtless to enter on it. So they are mostly a serviceable pack kept by farmers, or a well-appointed one by the squire; I scarcely recollect such a thing as a pack kept by a very young man, except Duckinfield Astley. It is like chess, too sturdy a game for them. I plead guilty to the same feeling myself; I chiefly went with harriers as a school for hunters, and it is the best for that purpose that I know of.

The owners of harriers, even supposing them to be kept at the owners' own expense, to be

kept in the best way, and hunted in the first style harriers can be, are not men of the same consequence or standing in a county as is the owner of the foxhounds. His funds are smaller, his power more limited, consequently all his acts and pursuits are on a minor scale. Still many of them are men of fortune, living on their own estate, which, probably, their ancestors have done from time immemorial. No man is more respected by the country round than is such a character. I do not except a duke, who may possibly keep his foxhounds in the same county; in fact it may happen that the squire's name is always mentioned with regard and respect, whereas that of "His Grace" or "My Lord's" is spoken of in quite a different manner; this difference for or against either, of course, depends on the MEN, not their POSITIONS. For owning large means, interest, and weight, will produce for the one no real respect, unless they are turned to good purpose, whereas the powers of a kind and

liberal man of limited means will produce a wish on the part of every one that the situation of the two men was reversed.

The squire in keeping his Harriers in good style, that is with huntsmen and whip well mounted, having a couple of horses each, does it either from preferring hare-hunting to fox, or arising from there being no foxhounds within reasonable reach. He is as proud of his hounds as any master of foxhounds can be of his; it is the genuine pride of the sportsman, unmixed with any pride of wealth, he is proud of their perfection, and he is right in being so if they are perfect.

He is perhaps a little prejudiced (who is not?) May occasionally indulge in a little harmless sarcasm on gentlemen foxhunters who hunt to show their horses and themselves, and sometimes ventures a few wicked questions, if he hears of any remarkable run the foxhounds have had, and any one is present who he knows was in the run. Such as what hounds particularly dis-

tinguished themselves on the occasion. How far they carried a head without a check, what occasioned that check when it did occur, whether they hit it off again from their own cast, or the subsequent one of the huntsman. These questions he somewhat mischievously puts, contemplating that not one man in ten of those who were out could answer one of them. An expressive, and indeed impressive "Humph," tell the one questioned as well as one word can express it, his comtempt of the party. He then, and there is "a lurking devil in his sneer," adds—I suppose you had some fine riding over so choice a country.

"Oh yes," answers readily the person questioned, at once finding himself quite at home on the subject proposed, "Gilmour took the lead and kept it for a time in spite of us all, Forrester went as straight as a bird. Strathmore knocked up his first horse, and nearly brought his second to a stand still, Stubbs, *sotto voce*, Ginger Stubbs,

went remarkably well, Wilson on his brown horse navigated the brook beautifully, in short skimmed it like a swallow. Will, the whip, got in, took a cold bath, but on getting his horse out went at a pace that shortly warmed him and himself again. A stranger, whom nobody knew, but splendidly mounted, rode one horse the entire run, and it is but fair in his case to quote from Harry Hieover, who in a run, he once described in verse, says of some one,—

"Very often was second—much oftener first."

I must find out who the fellow was. Standish went—"

"Bless me," interrupts the squire, "you must have had a hundred eyes to have seen what the hounds were doing and to watch the exploits of so many riders so closely as you appear to have done."

"Oh, I can tell you we had something better to do than watch the hounds."

"Stephens, you at least, had something else to do," quietly remarked the squire, "but, you know, I am an old fashioned fellow, and have the antediluvian idea that when we go hunting the hounds have some little claim on our attention. Yoi! Joker and Jovial!" cried the squire, seeing both feathering about an extremely likely place for a hare to be, or to have very recently been there. Jovial gave one of his deep bass assurances of a find, and Joker, putting in his treble, corroborated the fact. "Hark, Jovial and Joker!" cried the squire. "Goo, hark together! hoik!" responded the huntsman. A crack from the whips. Whip and "Loo on, hounds," sent the stragglers up to the leading hounds.

"Pray let them settle to the scent," cries the squire to the gentleman he had been talking to, observing him gathering up his reins, the prelude to a start, as if, from Bookby Holt he expected a crowd of horsemen at his heels, and the first desideratum was a good start; "pray

give them time, there is no cause for hurry here, let them once settle to their work, and though they are but harriers, if I know the country hares from this place usually take, you shall then be welcome to ride over them if you can."

"By gad, then, I'll try," thought the young gentleman; and so he did. But having in his contempt for harriers mounted the slowest horse he had, he found that harriers, if game ones, the scent good and the run straight, as is sometimes the case when hares come from afar, can go quite fast enough to make many a nag's tail shake, who is held to be a fairish horse with fox hounds.

"I hope," remarked the squire, when the hare was killed, "we have been able to show you that we sometimes get a gallop, even with harriers, it is always so at this season of the year, jack-hares come long distances and when disturbed make straight for home. I am happy

neither the superior qualities of your horse, or your own superior horsemanship, has been quite thrown away." This "palpable hit" told; the gentleman had found his horse had had quite enough to do not to disgrace himself or his rider, and, moreover, he went away convinced of a fact, on which till this day he had been somewhat sceptical, namely, that among those who hunt with harriers there are men who when they find it necessary CAN RIDE.

I have said I rarely knew a very young master of harriers, and I believe I am pretty correct in saying it is not often the case. It may be asked, did not the supposed squire keep his when a young man? It is possible he did, more probable that he did not.

It is sometimes the case that where a pack of harriers have been kept for a number of years, at the manor house, hall, or by whatever name the paternal mansion goes, it is a stipulation made by the will of the late owner, that

they shall be kept up as a kind of feudal appendage to the estate. If I am not mistaken this was the case when Mrs. Gee kept on the old pack, with whom she was, (I believe,) never seen. I also recollect a case where the young heir was compelled to do the same, though he d——d the beagles, as he contemptuously called them, and held their keep and the wages of the huntsman and whip a kind of entailed robbery on the means he wanted for other purposes. I believe he never was in their kennel or showed with them; he would have held it a dire disgrace for a man who kept eight hunters in one of our flying counties to do so.

Now it is by no means impossible that our squire, if he came into his inheritance very young, might have at one time shewn a little of this. Nor, in sooth, should I blame him. I grant the keeping eight hunters at Melton, Rugby or Leamington is a great temptation when put in comparison with a pack of harriers, in

possibly a bad fox-hunting country. I should have felt the same, but should not have gone so far as to d——n the beagles, or have felt the keeping them irksome, if the property enabled me to follow my inclinations, where and how I pleased.

But time sobers us all down. Some earlier, others at a later period of life; probably, our squire, whom we will set down as being forty-five or fifty, had found that eight hunters and eight children, somehow or other clashed, and as he was compelled by duty, and we will suppose by inclination, to provide for these "olive branches," and we are led to suppose he must be extremely happy, having "his quiver full of them," and the provision for the hunters being optional, he gave them up, and for the last ten years had stuck to his harriers, had forgotten, or at least had learned to look on metropolitan counties and the contingent expenses incurred there, as matters though highly to be en-

joyed, could be done without; and further, though he might not actually think, "que le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle," yet as a "*pis aller*," the justifiable pride of hunting with his own harriers has, now that the first enthusiasm of youth has past, no bad succedaneum for the greater *éclát* and stimulus of his early career.

But we may, on the other hand, suppose he had been always of less aspiring character, consequently in his predecessor's time he had always hunted with his father's harriers and now hunted with them as his own.

Supposing the squire to be a character, now grown almost obsolete, namely, a man born and reared in the country and seldom quitting it, or at most but for a very short period, the facility of travelling is now such, that fresh fish and the squire are both brought a distance of two hundred miles in something like eight hours. London men and country men are now so amalgamated that the old patriarchal squire is

lost, and "the fine old English gentleman" lives but in song.

This is all quite right; so it is that the venerable structure should be pulled down to make way for the more elegant and convenient modern edifice. Still the mind is hurt by such desecration, and what was dear to us in our youth, and that which we have been accustomed to look at with respect, still clings to the mind and heart not wholly devoid of feeling, and swayed by the impulse of interest, fashion, and modern innovation, or, perhaps, in some cases, improvement.

There can be no doubt but the modern cosmopolist, for so we may term most men of this age, is an improvement on the man of a hundred years back; his manners are more refined, his ideas more enlarged, and many prejudices that then existed no longer find place in the mind. No doubt it is better to be a citizen of the world than the denizen of a county only; but

is not such modern citizen, literally OF the world, greatly to the extinction of local as well as personal attachments? We cannot shut our eyes to the conviction that it is so. The man spending the far greater portion of his time in his county or village, becomes associated with all that relates to it; his interests are more or less the interests of others also, and, to a certain degree, theirs are his; setting aside all utopian ideas of the attributes of the human mind, nothing, perhaps, binds man to man with stronger ties than mutual interest. A family in misfortune and distress beneath one's eye, is not to be contemplated without wounding the feelings of any mind not callous to all the feelings of common humanity, but those feelings are not hurt when the distress is not seen. The facility of travelling brings the modern squire far from scenes that can wound the feelings, and places him amid others where all is calculated to dazzle and amuse.

I have spoken of certain prejudices found to exist in the minds of men mixing little with the world. They did exist, but were of a nature harmless in themselves and towards others. Have no prejudices risen up in their stead, of which we cannot say as much? — But to the prejudices as they once stood.

The squire keeping his harriers, did not disguise his contempt of and enmity to all turf men. In his misplaced prejudice he levelled all distinctions, owner, trainer, jockeys, and betters, all came within his category of persons to be anathematized, and when he went to a race in his immediate neighbourhood it was merely to meet friends and acquaintance, and afford a day's amusement to his family. If there were cards or lists offered for sale, he bought one, not that he knew a horse specified thereon; and had West Australian lived in such days, he had probably heard the name but could only recognise the horse or jockey by the color put down on the card.

If there was a plate given for hunters it was ten to one against his having any horse fit to go for it with the ghost of a chance of winning, and if peradventure he had and was told so, his reply would have probably been, "No, no, he is too good a hunter to be spoiled by putting him in training, he would not be worth a farthing to me afterwards."

Such prejudices are sure to exist between men who know little of the habits of each other, and sooth to say, in many instances, are felt, and justly too, where we are well aware of the practices of certain individuals. But it may be asked how is it that with such prejudices extant among masters of hounds, such men as the late Lord Darlington kept race horses while at the same time he was so enthusiastic and practical a fox-hunter? To this I reply — "Be it remembered I did not say all masters of hounds indulged in such prejudice, I merely stated that most country gentlemen keeping harriers, usually did, and the

difference between the position of a country squire with, say, fifteen hundred a year, and the nobleman with fifty thousand, will account for this. Probably the squire is not intimate with such men as the late Lord Darlington, the Marquis of Exeter, Lord Eglington, and many others against whom it would be profanation to utter a word of suspicion as to their straightforward intentions on the turf. The squire only hears of certain men whose transactions are not of the highest order. Now the noble lords mentioned, probably knew each other, and if not perfectly, well knew the character of each other. They would, probably, be just as loud in their condemnation of certain characters as could possibly be the squire, but though they censured the acts of such men it would not lead to their condemning racing altogether. And that there are some exceptions, even in country squires, I would mention Sir Tatton Sykes as an instance. But as "one swallow does not make a summer," nor would a great many,

so producing a few select individuals as exceptions does not refute my statement that in a general way a country squire is anything but a patron of the turf.

Let it be remembered that in saying so I not only go back to my early boyhood but to a period before that.

In those days a hunting man, that is most hunting men, would no more have dreamt of buying a racehorse to make a hunter of than they would a red deer. They were quite aware of the racehorse's powers of speed, but in such days such speed was uncalled for, it never struck them that the same powers of motion that enables the racehorse at speed to clear, for we will say two hundred yards, twenty four or five feet at each stroke, and for a few strides even more than that, would enable him to take a brook of a width our good ancestors seldom ever contemplated the riding at; they seemed to consider that a horse could clear little more

than a space that enabled him to bring his extended fore feet to the ground pretty nearly at the moment his hind legs left it. The intermediate space that his bound carries him over when actually in the air, was unknown. It is the thorough-bred, or a cross very close upon it, that has shewn us the astonishing elasticity of such horses. The consciousness of such powers in the high-bred horse induce him to face such obstacles without hesitation, while an equal consciousness of the want of it deters the lower bred animal from making the attempt.

I have more than once or twice seen a cart horse, when hounds were running, take the gate of the farm yard; this he could manage, it required more strength than bound; but having done so, the first fence of any size or width stopped him at once. In jumping the gate he had his hind legs on the ground till near the moment when his fore feet came down; but the idea of trusting his august body in the air

seemed not to have ever been contemplated in his "philosophy." I think, if my memory serves me, that Hambletonian in his race with Diamond is reported to have very nearly cleared a hundred feet in the last three strokes at the finish. One would be inclined to say, as Jem Hills the huntsman did, on seeing a stag take a tremendous bound at a fence, "What a magnificent jumper, how I should like to ride him." So, if Hambletonian cleared thirty odd feet in his gallop, we may infer what a leaper he would have been if practised at it.

Race horses in former days being by far fewer in number than are now bred, and those kept exclusively for racing purposes may account for our ancestors knowing little of the other latent qualities, they no doubt had at that time as well as now; thus comes the question, in fact enigma, that I am not prepared to solve, namely what became in those days of horses that were found not to have racing qualities sufficiently

permanent to induce owners to keep them in training, for there must have been such in those days as well as in the present. The only attempt at an answer I will venture is this; as I have before said, there were far fewer horses on the turf than now, heats were almost always run for any plate or stakes, the lengths abundantly longer; so that many a thorough game horse, with lasting powers, was kept in training though he might not possess the speed to tell in the finish of a mile, mile and quarter, or at most now a days as a customary length, a mile and a half race.

This peculiar power of finishing though having little to do with speed for two, three, or four miles, makes the difference between a successful race horse of the present day, and one who comes in second, third, fourth, or no where.

The stakes now made for two year olds enables an owner to test the qualities of his horse at a very early age, and such early

stakes encourage him to breed far greater numbers. There being such numbers bred causes the necessity of some vent for those offered for sale. Numbers are bought up at three years old to hold over to make hunters, and those who buy them often get a fine colt at three years old at half the cost he would have been had the buyer bred him. Some are bought by persons who think, and perhaps justly too, that having a little land the colt will pay for his keep as well as a given number of sheep or a heifer or two. Sometimes they improve and pay well selling them to make park hacks or ladies' horses, while on the other hand many find their way into a street cab and so "ends this great eventful history."

It may be said that if we find thorough bred horses now a days bred so much as they are with an eye to speed, (failing in this) make superior steeple chase horses and hunters, it

should seem that when race horses were bred so much for stoutness was the very time when one would have expected they would have been bought up for hunters with the greater avidity; so they would have probably been, but, as I stated, the squire knew then nothing about them, and did not value their speed if he did.

But enough of horses, let us return to men. But in speaking or rather writing of "The Sporting World," we must not only introduce but dilate on the attributes of animals so intimately connected with the subject, as much as if we were to write the Campaigns of Wellington we must introduce cavalry, infantry, and artillery, charges, storming, and all the casualties of warfare.

Come we now to another class of hare hunters, namely the farmer who at his own expense or jointly with his neighbours keeps a pack for their own especial gratifications; these will be found mostly to be like their owners, a

rough and ready sort of customer, not to be looked down upon on that account. Peradventure the pack are the veritable old blue mottles or crossed with them, a sort that would stick to their hare if she crossed an American Prairie on fire, who will not be deterred by strong gorse or an underwood of thorns, from which the faster, more highly bred, and symmetrically formed pack of the squire would shrink when coming in contact with their delicate skins; the former pack are a strictly useful though perhaps not an ornamental lot, so are their patrons; it would be well if we could say as much for those entrusted with the affairs of the nation, the latter want a cross sadly with a more working sort.

The farmer usually hunts the hounds himself, who being of a sort that take them at their work seldom make mistakes, when they do their own cast sets them right, so with such the chief business of their huntsman is to

"case" the hare when killed; the frequenters of the pack have no other inducement to follow them than an innate love of hunting, they are all Sportsmen, so where a whip is wanted or would be useful there are plenty out fully qualified for the office: I suspect we could not say as much of the squire's field, and with foxhounds there are not perhaps ten in two hundred who would not do mischief if they attempted such assistance.

These hare hunting farmers are mostly when seen out with their own pack rather a homely looking lot, many appear in their every day usual costume, in which they have been superintending their daily business and to which after two or three hours with the hounds they intend to return, nay, many appear on the same galloway they ride about their farms. Such things as neatly made white cords or leathers, with boots to correspond, are unseen, the effect of the *coup d'ôul* is of course not

very imposing, and the costume and different kinds of horses seem somewhat heterogenous. No matter, they are fond of the sport, are mostly Sportsmen, a somewhat noisy but jovial set, and though noisy and not standing much on etiquette more than they do on appearance, they take care not to incur the displeasure of the master or manager of the pack by any act of theirs.

It is not often that gentlemen are seen with them, the man who keeps his stud of hunters, I need scarcely say never. Occasionally, or frequently, a quiet gentleman in the neighbourhood joins them, partly for his amusement and partly out of compliment to a highly respectable and "*en masse*" influential class of men in their county, he is received with rough civility by some, more courtesy by others, and by perhaps the better informed and better bred master or manager of the pack with respectful but warm welcome; but let him wear anything

like affected superiority, or anything bordering on underrating what he sees, cannot expect respect or courtesy in return; in fact the man disposed to a day's hunting with the pack would be very unlikely to commit such a solecism in good manners.

In proof of what I say I will mention a short anecdote that, if my memory serves me, I have used in something I have written, but as it is exemplative of what I have stated here I am guilty of repetition.

On my first going into a neighbourhood there were a pack of staghounds within four miles, one pack of foxhounds within half-a-mile of my house, another the kennels of which were about seven miles off, an old established pack of harriers within a mile, and another, a scratch pack, kept by a farmer within two, so I wanted not for hounds of all sorts. Riding out one day I came across the latter, and an unusually sizeable and one sort of family-like

pack they were, being a stranger to those out I accosted one with "Good morning, FARMER, whose hounds are these?" "Good morning, GENTLEMAN, these hounds are mine, and my name is ———, now you know all about it;" such was his reply, and I felt the justness, quaintness, and somewhat sarcastic tone of it. I intended no offence certainly, but I was wrong, true he was a farmer in the literal sense of the word, but he did not like to be reminded of it in a way that appeared to him as if I meant to imply inferiority by the term; I saw my error but repaired it instantly by remarking "I beg your pardon, but they struck me as so very clever a pack I was anxious to learn to whom they belonged." We were good friends from that moment and remained so ever afterwards, at least so long as I continued to reside in the neighbourhood.

CHAPTER V.

I must return for a brief space to foxhounds, in order to exemplify what I am going to say relative to farmers' packs of harehounds in different counties, or rather the field that attend them.

The fields of Mr. Coyner's hounds are, or at least were, as different to that of their neighbours who hunted the Hatfield country, as are the company attending a Lord Mayor's ball to the *èlite* of one given by the Duke of Wellington. While again the rough, hard riding, wealthy farmers who compose the majority of the Holderness fields, are as different from the class of men visiting the Queen as human beings can well be, pursuing the same pursuit.

So with Harriers in Essex, where farmers are numerous and wealthy; their fields are as different to those who meet the Brighton at the Devil's Dike, where men of fortune and fashion form the majority, as two assemblies of persons can be. At the latter place each man is (barring of course the scarlet coat) as well dressed as their tailor, valét, and good taste can make them. Whereas in the former case, if the pack met, we will say at Warmington or Stifford, dark corduroys or cloth breeches, with boots or perhaps gaiters to match, would be found to preponderate.

It is quite true Brighton, chiefly owing to the railroad, has become a very different place from what it was when the late George the Fourth made it his residence for many months in the year, when the "Tenth were as intimately associated with the name of Brighton as are the Guards with London." The races then showed an assemblage of a large portion of the

nobility and fashion of the kingdom. But were he alive is it to be supposed THE PRINCE would now patronize a place filled with half the tailors, linen drapers, and grocers of London. Sidmouth it is true, thanks to natural causes, is inaccessible by rail, and its distance is too great for Mr. Stich, Mr. Tape, and Mr. Figs to make it a place to locate their families in. The Brighton Harriers, though not as select as they were in point of their fields, are out at a season of the year when the aforesaid gents. are forced to attend to their business or shops, otherwise they would be inundated by such persons. It is really a pity we cannot hunt in the summer for their gratification and convenience.

There are packs of harriers patronised by yet another class of men. These are what are termed the Town Harriers, and kept by subscription of the influential, or at least the hunting portion of the tradesmen of that town.

It is well people do not all think alike, for I confess if there were two or more grocers or linen drapers in the town, and one subscribed to the hounds and the other did not, I should most indubitably deal with the one that did, for though I do not go so far as to say I should feel certain of his having "a soul above buttons," it would indicate that though he might, and very properly too, attend to his buttons, he had the germ in him of something besides the NEWEST pattern to humbug the *oldest* customer with. It would be all but monstrous if the bootmaker or saddler did not give his subscription (that is if his business made it prudent in him to do so), if not, if he had the will but wanted the means, may all sporting men in his neighbourhood deal with him to put him in better circumstances. If he had the means but not the will eschew him by all means.

Such packs, I should say, are far less frequently attended by gentlemen than are the

farmers' scratch packs; this is easily accounted for by the dog and cat-like favour in which the generality of tradesmen and gentlemen hold each other; disguise it as you may by mutual civility, it exists not from the feeling of superiority on one and inferiority on the other, for no such feeling exists between the gentleman and the farmer. If you asked why this distinction exists, I should repeat the doggerel rhyme that says

> "I do not like thee, Doctor Fell.
> The reason why I cannot tell;
> But this at least I know full well,
> I do not like thee, Doctor Fell."

But the gentleman and the tradesman do know full well why they are mutually disliked, and I know it, but in this trading country it would not do to tell it.

There are some hounds that have so mutual an antipathy to each other that they can scarcely be trusted in a kennel together, nay, in some cases are forced to be separated, yet

in the field they will hunt together and mutually assist in killing their fox.

Now, in my statement of the feelings of some dogs towards each other, though it shows that on certain points their aim is the same; this holds good between gentlemen and tradesmen in another way, the one seeks convenience, the other advantage; so like the hounds, each has his aim, but that aim is different.

There is also this very wide difference, the dog only probably dislikes one hound in the pack, but is on the most friendly terms possible with all the pack beside. The gentleman dislikes the whole pack, excepting the one, two, three, or more, as the case may be, that he has found different from the community.

Having figuratively described the feelings of the gentleman, who of course has never been in trade, and the man who has always been so, by comparing the feeling to that of hounds, let me

now state that feeling to be much mitigated in the case of country gentlemen and country traders; in the country both are known and their acts are ostensible, this is a check on the conduct of each; there is more confidence, and that confidence is far less often abused in the country than it is in London, where each may do wrong and the wrong pass unobserved in the great vortex of London transactions. The gentleman patronises the same tradesman who, in themselves or their predecessors, have probably served the father and grandfather of the squire; this is a check on the acts of both, and each in his way is respected; and though I still say the town pack is much less frequently seen by the gentleman than is that of the farmers', it arises from their belonging to different cliques, forming as a pursuit consonant to the ideas and pursuits of gentlemen.

We will now drop the hunting man, having alluded to him in (I believe) every situation in

which he appears. I find the next on the list of legitimate sportsmen to be the owner of race horses.

Owners of race horses, as specified in the list, comprehend the noble or gentleman owning a string of horses which he keeps for the legitimate purpose of running for stakes, or in matches, as the case may be, and running them like a sportsman, "to win" of course, including the mystic proviso, IF THEY CAN; but the running "to win," though only two words, is perfectly understood in quarters where an opposite intention but too often prevails.

The anti-sporting community may say, "What earthly good can arise from a man keeping a string of race horses in training, beyond the employment of a few persons of equivocal character from their pursuits?" They think such questions would puzzle a man to answer. They are probably of the same clique as her I quoted many pages back, who "thanked God her hus-

band was no sportsman." In reply to the question of what service it can be to the community a man keeping a string of horses in training, my answer is, in a particular way he does a vast deal of good; but not if we take the short-sighted view of the abstract fact, of whether he in particular kept the horses or some one else did. This keeping them may only produce the advantage of giving employ to some eight or ten boys, a head lad, and a trainer, who, I am ready to admit, had they not turned their attention to this mode of life would have found employment in some other. It is therefore not, perhaps, the single act of the nobleman or gentleman keeping the horses that is to be looked at; it is the benefit that a number of such, keeping race horses, confer on society at large that is to be considered, and if the general effect is advantageous to the community, each man deserves our thanks, who in himself contributes towards it.

It is quite true we should not want the thorough bred horse if we were content to be drawn by a pair of coach horses, that were in fact formerly little better than a couple of cart horses of a better sort trimmed up; nor should we want him or his progeny if we travelled or took an airing with a lady on a pillion behind us; but we are not content with this, nor is it to be expected that in a country where every thing progresses our taste in horses, and what we require of them, should stand still.

It is therefore by the encouragement of racing the fine breed of horses we own are kept up. We are not to carp at a man's keeping race horses because he derives pleasure from the pursuit, and say he is actuated by no views as regards the general good; he does it, and society is benefitted by his so doing. One of the great characteristics of a man is the choice of his pleasures, and his being praiseworthy or to be reprobated mainly consists

in whether those pleasures are laudable, useful, or to be condemned.

It is not to be supposed that noblemen who breed largely and keep a string of race horses in training do so from the paltry idea of profit, many really calculate on losing by their horses, but still keep them on. They may do so possibly from the hope of being more fortunate in future, that not from the sordid influence of the money to be won, but from the hope of seeing their horses in front; many a nobleman would cheerfully give up the amount of the Derby stakes, and forfeit a handsome sum into the bargain, if any one could ensure him the pleasure of hearing Lord ——— wins, and knew their petted colt had fairly won "on his merits." Many may say, and so he would be pleased if his colt had won by some casualty to another horse, or the cleverness of his jockey, having taken the horse that could have won by surprise, (or at least his jockey); he might be so, and

probably would, for be it from what cause it might, "he had won the Derby," but the gratification would be greatly diminished by the circumstance. It would be like winning a game at chess by some palpable mistake of our adversary; we could say we had won the game and could say we had beaten so and so a game, but the feeling would be very different if we, in racing phrase, had won on our merits.

The advantages derived from noblemen and others keeping race horses does not stop in our having a superior class of horse for our use. That horse must of course be bred somewhere, and by someone. In former days the farmer confined himself to agriculture; he bred perhaps for his own use from the mare who worked in his plough so long as it was safe for her to do so, she then produced her colt, and again in a short time was seen in the same situation, with her colt travelling by her side; a pretty school this for producing anything like an active

animal. There he strayed by her side for perhaps seven hours, walking at the rate of two or two and a half miles an hour, for the better portion of the time, leg-weary and dispirited; and such was the case, whether the colt owed its existence to the fore horse of the farmer's team, or whether his paternity arose from some travelling stallion (called) half-bred, if the owner designed him as a nag for his own riding. The very tuition of his youth in point of want of activity is enough to spoil any colt; early habit brings him, as a horse, about on a par with the boy who blunders along over the stubble by the side of his horses.

The farmer derives no profit, or very little, from such breeding; for partly from early inactive habits, partly from never knowing the taste of corn until he was broken, and then being consigned to the care of some ignorant (generally drunken), and always unskilful colt-breaker, he turns out an animal that barely is worth the proven-

der and trouble of rearing, and is ridden by the farmer, no one else wishing to become a purchaser.

But farmers (though the most imperturbable of men, are the hardest of any to persuade out of any old customs or into any new ones) have seen their own interests in becoming breeders as well as agriculturists, have improved on the "modus operandi" in breeding, and indeed in most things. They have become accustomed to see fine colts and fine horses, have (many of them) learned the secret of producing such, and have risen from comparative poverty to comparative affluence; this they would never have done but from the effects produced by hunting and racing; not, I admit, from one horse running against another for stakes; but the getting horses fitted for such purpose has so accustomed men to see fine horses that they will have them (or rather their produce) for their use, and the breeder finding this to be the case, finds it his interest to breed such, or at all events horses approaching the race horse in breed.

It may be said we always had racing at the time when carriage horses with their docked tails, like the old waggon horse, was in use; and when portmanteaus and ladies were carried on pads or pillions behind the horseman. It may therefore be objected, that as noblemen kept race horses in those days, it is not to racing we are indebted for the fine breed of horses we now possess. This reasoning seems plausible, particularly to the non-racing world; it is not, however, tenable. That we possessed race horses in those days is indisputable; but they were of a very different stamp to the Velocipedes, Bay Middletons, Flying Dutchmen, and West Australians of the present day. It would, I suppose, be profanation to say a word against Eclipse or his reported performances, which were very few. But if we may trust to Mr. Stubbs' portrait of him he was, comparatively speaking, about as mutton-shouldered, course headed a brute as we need wish to look at;

and, with the exception of good quarters and loins, as little like a race horse as need be. If we may credit report of the trial of his speed against time he was an extraordinary animal. Flying Childers, of whom similar reports are circulated, or rather handed down, looked a good deal more like a Flyer.

But it was from no such cause as the quality of the horses then running that the present breed of thorough or three-quarter bred horses had not appeared; the fact is, they were not wanted in days when twenty miles in four hours was the maximum of speed at which our good ancestors were conveyed in their COACHES, such horses as are now in use would have jumped out of their harness if restrained by dragging the coach out of one hole and presently getting it into another. This mode of conveyance at the time was accelerated speed for the conveyance of the fair dames; the pillion, I apprehend, must have been a walking affair, unless, by an amble pace then

taught horses, increased velocity was obtained; for a lady seated on the rump of a horse would have been, had a canter been perpetrated, in about as enviable a situation as if seated on the stern of a vessel in a rough sea.

Hunting was, in those days, a very different thing to what it has been for the last fifty years or far more. Blood was not then the desideratum in the hunting horse. Cock-tailed horses and cocked hats were then both seen together in the hunting field, and on the road the sturdy hack, if safe enough, was sure to be fast enough. Thus, such horses as we now possess, not being wanted for, indeed not suited to, ordinary purposes, the beneficial influence of the patronisers of the turf was not felt as it now is.

Independent of this, the number of race horses then kept was not, I should say, more than as one to fifty, and the thorough bred sires still less in proportion. It is true both King

James and Charles imported royal mares, as they were termed. These, I opine, were put to some of the indigenous sires at home, and a heterogeneous admixture it must have been; still such an improvement was a great one, on the old stock. The importation of Barbs and other Eastern Horses, gave an increased impetus to the breed of race horses; and now, thanks to racing views in men, we possess the animal we have.

I think I have already shewn the Owners of Race Horses not to be the useless beings inconsiderate or cynical people may hold them to be.

It may be objected that many men have been ruined by racing; granted, so they have by railroads, but that does not make railroads an accommodation to be put down or dispensed with; there are rogues of railroad projectors, some rogues among railroad directors, and there are thoughtless, confiding, and speculative people constantly dabbling in what they know little

about, in such enterprises. So have many been ruined by racing, there are rogues (and to spare) in racing transactions, some rogues among those who keep racehorses, and an equal number of thoughtless, confiding, and speculative persons dabbling in racing enterprise who know little about the matter, this says nothing; as well might we object to the funds because many persons have burnt their fingers by dabbling in them. Railroads, in themselves, we have found to be beneficial to the country on the broad scale, so are the funds, so is racing, it is only with the administration of either we have to find fault, and the folly of persons trusting to their own views of either.

We have close on one-hundred-and-fifty meetings in the year at recognised places of sport, and something like six-hundred-and-eighty avowed owners of race horses, it is easy to judge this must occasion an astounding circulation of money; we are told the circulation of money

is the foundation on which the prosperity of a country rises, if so, let the six-hundred-and-eighty owners of race horses have their due, for few men promote it more.

There are no class of men whose conduct undergoes such strict scrutiny as does that of the owners of race horses; if people would but reflect a little they would see that such scrutiny is overdone, and in many cases totally uncalled-for; a man to do wrong in racing transactions must trust his honor and character to the mercy of several individuals, the first would be his trainer, then (formerly) his jockey, I say formerly, because of late years they have found the thing is made far more certain where it is practiced not to trust to him; instances are very rare indeed now where a jockey purposely loses a race; where he does, I should say it was in a case where his individual interest is concerned, totally unknown to either trainer or owner.

An owner wishing to lose a race can but

arise from the wish to make money by bets. To effect this he cannot be seen betting against his own horse, he must consequently entrust others to do so, who, though they may not be QUITE in the secret, must have it in their power to say, if they choose to do so, Lord ——— employed me to get on all the money I could against his horse; thus at once damaging his character as a sportsman, a gentleman, or a man of common honesty. Is it to be supposed that any gentleman would thus confide his character to the keeping of a man who must be of (to say the least) very questionable character himself, and who on any real or imagined offence can take reprisal in the bitterest way? An owner doing this virtually makes himself a slave ever after to such a man. Nor must he confide in his trainer in any transaction that will not bear the light, for in doing so he converts his servant into his master, and one who would very properly remind him of

circumstances that would embitter his after life so long as life remained. The idea is preposterous. There are characters who would do so, of whom I shall hereafter speak, but the owners of race horses, whether noble or gentlemen, would no more, in a general way, do it than they would commit a burglary.

We know that Royalty itself would not shield a man where any thing doubtful occurred. The Escape affair was perhaps the most impudent, unjust, and ungrateful return ever made to an august personage, one of the best patrons the turf ever had.

I once heard an owner of race horses say to his jockey, "I have set my heart on winning the ———— to-morrow, your horse goes for them; now, remember, if you can win your race to-day with anything like ease, do so, but I will not have my horse cut up for that purpose," fortunately for the owner the horse did win.

Whether anything like this was stated to the rider of Escape, as being likely to be the Prince's wish I know not, or whether Chifney under a similar feeling did not push his horse to extremity in the first day's race I know not either, nor can it ever be known; but had the Prince given any such directions as I state an owner of race horses to have done, the most that could be said is that it was injudicious; but a man like H.R.H. might well think he might give such directions (if he did so) and that his elevated position would carry firm assurance he was actuated by no mercenary motives in doing so. But certain persons lost their money. This they could not forgive, and whether Prince or Demigod, their having done so, called forth all the venon of their tongues, to an extent that must ever be remembered with feelings of contempt for the instigators of it.

It may be said that while racing exists betting will exist also. It will and must

ever be so, for the mind of man is so constituted that it cannot exist without excitement; but were we to do away with racing we should not be a bit forwarder on the score of improvement or rather reformation. Take away any thing from which man derives amusement and excitement, he will find a succedaneum, for we are but too well aware that excitement is the touch-stone to man's amusement. The betting on racing is a mere bagatelle when put in comparison with the far more fatal dice box. Do away with that you would not stop betting and play. Shut up all the rouge and noir tables in London, men would chalk out its similitude to one on a common table covered with baize. Thus the argument that racing promotes betting (though fact) becomes futile. They bet largely on racing, granted; it is a pursuit that admits of high and extensive betting, and men bet accordingly. If all betting could be at once stopped by putting down racing, put

it down if you please, though in doing so you would lose its beneficial effects in other particulars, but it would do no such thing. Greyhounds, rowing, sailing yachts, or pedestrians would then be brought out, and thousands would be betted on Lord Such-a-one's or Mr. Some-body's dog Hero, as they were on his horse Voltigeur, or any other horse; or Lord Yarborough's clipper yacht would cause thousands to be betted for or against her, as much as the same amount is now betted on a race horse. Nothing can do away with betting; deprive it of one accessory some other would spring up and raise its hydra head in spite of all you can do. Let men, therefore, take their own way; let them, for let them you must, pursue their fair betting there as they like. So long as they fairly adventure their own money against that of another man's it is only the money changing hands after all.

There is one redeeming clause in favour of

a man's betting on the turf against that of his taking up the dice-box; he rarely bets so heavily on any particular race as to ruin himself at once. He loses his thousand at one meeting, wins his five hundred at the next; loses three or four hundred on such a race, and wins his two on another event; true he still loses, but by doing so he has timely warning if he chooses to profit by it, if not he is either a simpleton or an inveterate gambler and better that nothing can save. A man, we will say, bets on a race and loses his money; the meeting over, the excitement is over, and he has time to brood over his losses, and, I should think, unpleasant recollections of the event. But with the dice-box it is different; he loses; there is the fatal instrument of his losses at his hand courting his use of it; the hopes of retrieving what he has lost, and with such temptation at hand I can readily believe it hard to resist; he is tempted; follows

up his ill luck, which in the generality of cases follows him up also, the result is easy to anticipate.

Let it not be supposed that, in speaking in favour of racing and the owners of race horses, I am an advocate of betting. No man dislikes it more than myself, but I cannot but recollect that every national amusement and every national enterprise has its drawback in some way; that drawback we must bear, and if the good preponderates over the evil it is all, in most things, we have a right to expect.

CHAPTER VI.

In writing "The Sporting World," I hope it will be understood that I am not eulogising Sportsmen as paragons of perfection, nor in the aggregate do I mean to represent them as better, more liberal, or more agreeable than other men. I am quite content with representing them as not worse; an opinion that the non-sporting community, I am sorry to say, are very prone to entertain. They are apt to think that a man not directing his means and energies to some direct business must be a useless being. The only utility they give him credit for is in some particular in which his position and pursuits tend to the encouragement of that

particular trade or occupation; but as to his being serviceable to his country, their narrow minds cannot compass the idea.

There is another very material error which such persons cherish, which is this; they consider a man who, as they think, devotes his whole time to amusement, must necessarily devote a considerable portion of it to vice; as is sometimes said of a missing boy, "I dare say he is at some mischief or other." But they would figuratively go further with the Sportsman if they could. They would play the part by him the schoolmaster is stated to have done by the boy, viz., flog him while he had him at hand, under the conviction that he WOULD deserve it in the course of the day.

Now with submission to these disciplinarians I affirm, without hesitation, there is LESS vice among true Sportsmen than is found in many men of different pursuits. They live a great part of the year in the country; are mostly

family men, and I believe it will be allowed are to the full as domesticated and attached to their families as are the denizens of Rood Lane, Fenchurch Street, or the Poultry. I mention such persons as it is chiefly from them their families, and connections, the objections emanate against the Sportsman, of whom or of whose conduct they can know nothing.

As a matter of course the Sportsman does not apply his time to the making of starch, or the manufacturing of saltpetre, his position forbids it, and his income renders it unnecessary. He may (it may be said in the usual cant of certain persons) do nothing for the benefit of his family. His family are benefitted already by the position they hold, and by the fortune he was heir to. He does not certainly pay a couple of hundred pounds to apprentice his son to a builder, but he pays a far larger sum for his commission in the army; exerts his interest to procure him a situation under Government,

or pays a liberal sum to qualify him to fill one of the learned professions. He keeps his daughters at home making them (if you please to use the term very rife in some quarters) "fine ladies," (but to eschew such term), by making them elegant women, and affording them the necessary education and accomplishments, he qualifies them (with what fortune he may be able to give them) to marry in their own sphere, and thus carry on the line of aristocracy (or if his position is not so high), the gentry of the country.

It will be found the conduct of the Sportsman is in this particular somewhat the same from the noble to the farmer, he either makes his son a farmer or places him with the brewer, maltster, or sometimes attorney or surgeon in the neighbouring town, but in most cases it would go "against the grain" with the honest farmer to see him what he would probably designate "a counter skipper."

His daughters, probably, like those of his

superiors, are kept chiefly at home gratifying themselves, in their turn to fill the same situation their mother has done before them, their reward being "sporting a new bonnet at church," or "a love of a gown" in which to appear when friends are asked to "take a dish of tea," or when they go out for such purpose, either events ardently looked for should the said dress be a new one. It is possible some one more sprightly, or at all events less domesticated than the rest, may be apprenticed to the milliner of the neighbouring town, who displays on her board or plate "from London;" our young aspirant here acquires the idea that nothing but London can qualify her to become eminent in her business. Her first overture to her parent in this particular, is probably met with the bluff observation, on the part of her father, "London be d——d," but the coaxing of his Maria prevails; he is even won into the half belief that it is for her interest that she should

go. He sees her up to town and confides her to the care of Madame ———, where he leaves her, for the first time in their lives, the post must now be their only mode of communication; he returns home, feels he has lost something, and for the first time drinks his ale handed to him by his good wife without some hilarous expression of his content and happiness. Such probably were his first feelings. He little thought the girl of his heart, one on whom both parents had lavished their fond care and affections, was doomed never again to cross his threshold, or mix again with her less attractive but more domesticated sisters; but we will drop an event too often the fate of the once virtuous and happy. Was the anathema the honest farmer fulminated against London, the result of second sight, a foreboding of what was to smite his honest affectionate heart? Better had it been had he, as the gentleman is accused of, "done nothing for his family," better had he kept

his cherished one at home, where, with homely unity of feeling, she might still have remained and filled the situation of life her family had done before her; but now the stricken father, with altered mien and saddened heart, has only to curse the vortex of temptation into which he trusted his child. Oh, London! such is too often thy work!

I am not meaning to infer that the daughters of the tradesman or mechanic are less virtuous in deed than the daughters of the farmer, but there is a purity in the minds of the latter that, more or less, becomes sadly perverted in the former. They must witness scenes of which the others have no conception; true, they may avoid contamination by them, but they learn, nay, see, that they exist. They bear what they have seen in mind, and this produces reflection on what it would be far better they knew not of. There is a knowingness about London girls we do not find in

the purer minded daughters of the country. It may be well for the Town girl that it is so, that by knowing her danger she may avoid it; but it is a sad school for a girl, and the system is more than questionable that consists in shewing her vice that she may not fall a victim to it; quere, has it not often a contrary effect?

London people of either sex seem to think country-bred persons below themselves in the scale of inhabitants of the world, and the greatest contempt they can express is, "You may see by his or her look they are from the country;" or, "They have quite a country look with them." True they have so, but what of that; the bonnet of the girl may, and probably, is not of the last mode; but it may be a very becoming bonnet for all that. The clothes of the man may carry with them a country cut, but they may possibly carry with them a more sensible cut than those of the London gent. If you

want anything in the latest taste come to London for it by all means; but your ridicule is quite misplaced on him who does not. London is not all perfection, and its inhabitants far less so. The London artizan is superior to the country one, both in his business and address (when he pleases to be the latter), we give him credit for that; so is he superior in impudence, extortion, and blackguardism. The London youth look on their country cousins quite as objects of pity, and offer to chaperone them about on the latter coming to London. In what high attribute of mind is the one so superior to the other? Probably in very many instances his knowledge is chiefly shewn in knowing all the vices of a London life. He may, and would probably, laugh at his country cousin, not knowing his way to the Mansion House; the other might as well laugh at him for not knowing his way through the new forest. A harmless joke on either side would be quite pardonable, but do not

let the London man impugn the sense of the country one for not knowing his way about the city. The London youth may take the country one to the play, shew him the intricasies of the theatre, the lobby, and may pique himself on winking at, or speaking to, several of the unfortunates he finds there; this only shows his father has been very careless in not knowing such was his practice, or very idle in not horsewhipping him well when he found it was so. Probably was the thing represented to mama and his sisters, their only reply would be, "Yes, we believe that Alfred is a little gay. They would then wonder, if brought up in this way, he turns out a scamp and reprobate.

I trust I have shewn that the hunting-man and the owner of race horses are each highly beneficial to society, in different ways, and that I have shewn they are as domestic as men following other pursuits in life. We will now pass on to the Coursing man.

Of these there are two classes—the man who runs his dogs at public coursing meetings and him who courses for his own amusement and that of his friends. Taken in a national point of view as to its benefits to society, coursing no doubt falls far short of either hunting or racing, it however promotes what must ever be held as of first importance, namely, sociability among country gentlemen. I am not aware of one feature in coursing that even the hypocritical can censure like racing. It has its places of meeting, and on a more limited scale, it there produces a considerable circulation of money, the betting sometimes runs high, but is confined to noblemen and gentlemen, and is never to an extent that is ruinous, hurtful, or inconvenient to the losers. The stakes run for are sometimes of considerable amount, at such places as Amesbury, Liverpool, Newmarket, Swaffham, making the stake up some three or four hundred pounds, a sum quite sufficient to attract the

attention of gentlemen; but for the welfare of coursing, not of magnitude enough to attract that of professed betters; this keeps it select. To say it is a strictly gentlemanly pursuit, we have only to recall certain names as staunch patronisers of the leash that places it in this respect in a very high grade among field sports. The Dukes of Queensbury, Norfolk, and Gordon, Earls Orford, Rivers, Chesterfield, and Malmsbury, Sir H. B. Dudley, Major Topham, Capt. Mellish, with many others whose names I do not call to mind. Even the fairer part of creation has joined her name to others of note; Miss Richards, of Compton Beauchamp, will long be remembered as an extensive owner and breeder of greyhounds. It is in fact one of the oldest sports we know of, and existed when foxhunting was unknown.

Singular as it may appear the owner of a race horse will see his horse lose a race with perfect equanimity of mind and temper, where

the owner of a greyhound chafes and frets if his dog is beat, though the stakes he ran for were not, perhaps, in value, one quarter of those for which the horse was beaten. I account for it in this way, in the first place the owner of the horse is aware of the uncertainty of racing, so his mind is prepared for frequent loss; he is aware a race may be lost from some cause in no way effecting the goodness of his horse. Supposing him a breeder; he well knows that though a mare may throw a colt as good as horse can be, she may produce her next not in figurative term good enough to "run for a man's hat." We cannot get into a strain that are at all on a par with each other; so his credit as a breeder is not implicated by defeat. Now the thing is different as regards dogs, doubtless they will not all have the same attributes, but they approach much nearer to it than do horses. Major Topham or Lord Rivers piqued themselves on their breed of greyhounds,

probably they hanged a good many, and only produced in public such as were likely to do them credit, and keep up their prestige of never breeding a bad one; thus one of their breeding from such circumstance alone would command a price surprising to the non-coursing man. But a racing-bred colt would be a somewhat expensive victim to hang, so he makes his appearance as own brother to ——, but "no more like him than I to Hercules;" shewing as I have said that in breeding race horses we must not expect the same breeding in any way to ensure the same results; and to make away with the bad ones that they may not disgrace their parents would be a somewhat expensive practice. The owner of the greyhound can do this, and therefore when he does produce one on whom he feels he can place confidence as not being likely to mortify him by defeat, his chagrin is unbounded if he sees him get "the go by" from an unlikely-looking dog, and worse than

all, peradventure the property of some one on whose breeding he has looked with something bordering on contempt. "What, the blood of old Snowball (or any other celebrated dog) beat by a dog of 'no mark or likelyhood!'" Perhaps in this case there was no excuse for defeat. There is no "pulling," no "hocussing" here, for as Lord Rivers said when asked how it happened that he betted so heavily on his greyhounds when he would not venture a shilling on a race, "My dogs do not carry jockies," was his Lordship's somewhat pithy reply. The coursing man feels an interest in his dogs quite independent of any stakes they may run for. So, to a certain degree, does the owner of race horses feel an interest in them, but I shall have to mention characters by and by on the turf who feel no interest but in the stakes, and of course the bets depending on the contest for them.

Private coursing, as a sport, is not very much in vogue among the Sporting World.

Hunting men very improperly regard the private courser as a kind of licensed poacher, and the harehunter considers him as a most unwarrantable intruder. The hunting man may possibly attend a coursing meeting; he looks on it as a kind of racing affair, and as such, perhaps, feels some little interest in a friend's dog entered there, but if he meets a private courser going out with his leash of greyhounds the apparition of "Death on the pale horse" would not be more abhorrent to him. But let me tell our hare hunting friend that he catches it in his turn from the fox hunter, and "There's the d—— beagles" is a blessing often vented by the huntsman of the foxhounds if the packs chance to cross. The dislike some sportsmen entertain of the pursuits of others is, I regret being obliged to admit, carried out to a somewhat illiberal extent among the Sporting World; this should not be. The stag hunter, fox hunter, hare hunter, the courser, the shot, and

the racing man, should each respect the pursuits of the other, though he may not feel disposed to join in them. I have stated what the hare hunter thinks of the courser; the owners of the long tails is not a whit less exclusive in his ideas, "There's those d—— shooters" is a compliment I have more than once heard from the courser, if he found a brace of pointers or setters ranging over a locality he had proposed to find a hare in.

Private Coursing is usually practised by men whom age or a want of enthusiasm prevent hunting, or, whose pecuniary means are only equal to a galloway and a leash or so of dogs. The farmer is frequently a courser for a very prudent and sensible reason, he can take his greyhounds out at such times as suit his business, he is not obliged with them to make "a day of it." He hears of a hare having been seen close by, he tries to find her, succeeds or not in doing so and killing her.

He can devote a mere couple of hours at any moment that suit him, but he may not be so situated as to afford the expense (or if he could) the time for a day's foxhunting. Do not, brother sportsmen, illiberally grudge him the little interval of sporting he snatches from more serious avocations.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SHOT.

THERE are a far greater variety of patrons of the gun than are to be found among any class of men pursuing any sport, (if we except racing). This arises from several perfectly natural causes. On the broad scale it may be done any how. Foxhunting, with the exception of the establishment being carried on a little better or worse, must be done the same way. Of harriers, on a minor scale, we may say the same thing. The courser must (or at least in nineteen cases in twenty does) live in the country. But the shot ranges from the noble with his grouse shootings, his estate preserves,

gamekeepers, and watchers, down to the tailor of Regent Street, who perhaps has money, and the little farmer who has not, may all shoot. You cannot point out any class or description of men (above pauperism) of which I will not name several who shoot; even pauperism that I have made an exception is in fact no exception at all, for many in such state do watch for opportunity and shoot, verily, in many cases to considerable extent, an old musket bought for perhaps thirty shillings, and a cunning cur dog, sadly disturbing the peace of my lord's pheasants.

Thus there is no characteristic of the shot by which to describe or judge him. He is a nondescript, that is by describing one man we could no more convey an idea of what or who the next might be, than we could by describing one passing vehicle in the strand enable anyone to form a guess at what the next might be. The master of hounds contributes largely to the

gratification of those around him; this produces him respect and regard. I fear I cannot say thus much of the shot; he, in very many instances, pursues his amusement alone, or with another person. He alone is gratified, unless a friend may be gratified in a different way by the receipt of that which is consigned to the care of the cook. There is nothing national in the pursuit of the shot, that is speaking on the general nature of the sport.

The Duke of —— may fill his house with friends invited to a *battue*, a mode of ANNIHILATING game of rather recent practice; thus far for a day or two he contributes largely to the amusement of others; but this cannot occur often. It is the only event in shooting in which he can see an assemblage of Sportsmen around him.

Shooting has conferred greater benefit on certain persons of late years than it ever did formerly. Since grouse shooting has become all but a mania the letting of some moors has risen

in point of price at least twenty fold; so much the better for the owners of them. The crowds that now go down must cause a considerable outlay of money in localities where twenty years since a five-pound-note (the amount of an inn bill) was an epoch; now the presence of lords, aye and ladies fair is as much expected in August as are strawberries in Covent Garden in their proper season. A few years ago a rude car or cart was the only kind of vehicle with which Sandie claimed acquaintance, now the London phaeton and barouche are as well known to him as they are to the inhabitants of Grosvenor Place. Thus far the present mania for grouse shooting confers a benefit on society.

Let us hope (what I do not believe) that packs of grouse are like shoals of herrings, not to be visibly diminished by any quantity killed. Should it not be so, peradventure shortly the grouse shooter will rise some fine morning and find he has nothing left to shoot at.

Shooting, like many other things, may be done in a very expensive or very economical manner, and possesses this advantage; it may be done in the latter way in just as Sportsman-like a manner as the former. Now a man cannot hunt a fox with a single couple of hounds, or hare either; he cannot call it coursing if he only uses one greyhound. But he can shoot as much like a Sportsman with one couple of well broke pointers as if he had more. With a keeper at his elbow and a relay of dogs waiting his pleasure, he might be able perhaps to kill more head of game and beat a larger tract of country, but he would not be doing the thing one atom more like a Sportsman than his more humble neighbour, he would only do it more like command of large fortune; this in a great measure accounts for the numerous patronisers of the trigger from all classes.

I can conceive few things pleasanter than arriving in your mail phaeton with a friend or

two, at the appointed locality, finding everything in readiness to your hand; guns loaded for you, if such is your practice; a gamekeeper fraught with every necessary information; dogs waiting, with relays when wanted; to say nothing of the well practised servant with everything ready in the way of refreshment when called for, from bottled porter to marischino, from peregaud pie to the plain sandwich; you have only to doff your great coat, and a waive of the hand sets perhaps a hundred pounds worth of dogs' flesh going. This is all very imposing, very attractive, and must be highly gratifying to the possessor of such luxurious way of doing things.

The grouse shooter has found unwonted pleasure in the pursuit of late years, (quere) Why is this? Grouse were as wild, inhabited the same districts twenty years since as they do now, the pursuit was equally wild and exciting then as now. Is it not that Balmoral

throws a halo round the surrounding district? Is it not that the Prince Consort, making shooting and deer stalking the only field sports he pursues with anything like avidity, causes the locality to be sought, and the pursuits it affords so eagerly followed? It is a tacit compliment paid to his taste. Old statesmen who would be far more comfortable at their country seats, brave the Northern breeze. Quere; Is not this that they may be warmed by basking in the sunshine of royal favour? Else why this sudden migration Northwards? I cannot otherwise solve the question.

There are some men who, without being anything out of the common way as shots, are celebrated for their pointers and setters, and no bad thing do they make of it. The rearing a pointer or setter pup is a very different affair to that of rearing a racing colt. If well broke and having been shot over a season, I have seen such dogs fetch fifty or sixty guineas, in some cases more. Verily, either master or man must be

peculiarly adroit in breaking dogs, or the dog himself must possess instinct of no common order to become an animal worth such a sum. In pointers, as in greyhounds, a great deal depends on the strain; some take to their business all but naturally, probably it is dogs emanating from such strains that fetch the prices I have named.

There are celebrated shots who shoot as much for the èclat of the thing as from any love of the sport. When a man has arrived at this I can readily conceive his enthusiasm in shooting; but when a man, like an acquaintance of mine, would shoot all day and bring home a single bird, wounding many from firing at the covey, not the bird, I must consider it a very slow affair. The only excuse for him was he had no other earthly pursuit; pity he had this.

It is not always that a celebrated shot is the best sportsman; he is jealous of his reputation as being the former, availing himself of

his adroitness and firing at a bird in a situation where the common shot would hold it useless in him to make the attempt. The finished artiste sometimes refuses a shot where he thinks it more than probable he should bring his bird down, if he feels it also quite possible he should not. Such shots no doubt frequently kill under disadvantages that would render the thing a hopeless attempt on the part of common shots; for though difficult it is not so to the crack shot. He feels himself quite sure of his bird under such disadvantages, and he brings it down; but, as I said before, if he thinks the event uncertain he will not risk a miss. This shews merely a little harmless vanity, and is far better than my acquaintance blazing away at a covey, wounding, probably, three or four, and killing none. It must be generally in the case of a very long shot, or an extremely awkward one, that crack shots do not bring down their bird dead. In a shot under favourable

circumstances they would feel their reputation jeopardised if they only wounded a bird, it would be, in point of mortification, next to a miss.

I can readily conceive such men being willing to give very high prices for well broke dogs. I can conceive few things more provoking to such a man than seeing birds get up before him, out of gun range, through the inadvertence or (what I firmly believe such casualties frequently arise from,) the want of nose in his pointer, he knows it is a brace lost to him. The ordinary shot may feel, if he does not own it, that, had the birds not risen until he was within shot of them, he might have missed, even doubtless to him the chagrin would be great in having his chance done away with by his dog, but neither dog or master being first-rate at their business it is but fair they should make allowance for each other, the dog for his master frequently disappointing him by missing, the master if the dog, in some instances, does

not give a chance of hitting; but, with the crack shot, if birds get up within ordinary gun range, a brace of them may be as surely considered in the bag as if already there.

There is one leading characteristic in the pursuit of the shot which it is pleasurable to state, Though I must hold it very far behind hunting or racing in the public good it does, at all events it neither does harm in itself or leads to any. A pretty good character to give any fashionable pursuit.

I know what hypercritics and cynics will say; they will affirm what is quite true, it leads to the strict preservation of game, and that leads to affrays between gamekeepers and poachers, which often end in outrage and sometimes death, more frequently in imprisonment or transportation. "What!" exclaim these very philanthropic persons, "imprison a man, (which is the mildest punishment that awaits the poacher) tear him away from his family" (I quote words

I have heard used) "for the sake of a partridge, a pheasant, or a hare." Let us look a little into this for I am not one of the many who would annihilate a poacher; he is usually a somewhat looseish character I admit, but he may not at heart be a bad fellow after all, but the ordinances of society are such as induce us to keep a watch on his proceedings.

The case stands thus; the owner of the land feeds the game, or rather they feed themselves from that land, they are his by custom, but more than this, they are his by justice. He feeds his poultry by his own or servant's hand, no one disputes his right to claim them as his property; the game is as much so who feed themselves, for it is his grain they eat. I very much doubt whether a landowner gets his hare cheaper, if we could calculate what she has eaten and the mischief she has done, than does the man who buys her in the market. Would these said philanthropists let a man go

into their hen house and help himself? They would be as loud in their condemnation of him as the game preserver is of the poacher; they would "imprison a man" and "tear him away from his family," without remorse; if he had purloined a nice lot of chickens they intended as side dishes at their tables, or the turkey they saw, in prospectu, at the head of it; they have fed these, so has the landowner fed the game, both have an equal right to the property, but not the one more than the other.

But, argue these preservers of chickens but non-preservers of game, it is in many instances the lord of the manor or head landowner who preserves the game, while the farmer, or in other words the under-tenant, feeds them. It is so in many cases, but the farmer knows on taking his farm that the game from the adjacent property, and also that bred on the farm he is anxious to take, will feed partly on that farm; he calculates his loss by them, and takes

or refuses the farm labouring under such disadvantage or not as he pleases. As regards my own private opinion it is this; I would say to a farmer on taking a farm of mine, "Now look ye here, Neighbour, I understand you shoot, do so, shoot what game you want for your own consumption, and of course that of your family, and in return, help to keep a sharp eye on my preserves."

I am quite convinced such mode of conduct would be far more efficacious towards the preservation of game than if left to the care of keepers and watchers, who too often wink at, or keep out of the way of the poachers' practice, and only bring those to justice who in some way have acted contrary to the wishes of those employed to watch, or what is just the same thing, have neglected or declined to act in a way consonant to their wishes and interest.

A farmer holding, we will say, four hundred or more acres of land is a highly respectable

man; he may or may not wish to shoot, but it is galling to his pride to be told that he must not. Under such circumstances all the poachers in the country might net or snare for all he cares under his very nose. Is it to be supposed he would bring a perhaps useful labourer to him to justice for purloining game that he, the farmer, must not presume to touch? On the contrary, for human nature will out, if he hears a gun or a dog, or even sees persons on his landlord's preserves, he rather chuckles at the fact; whereas were he considered as a humble brother sportsman he would be interested in, and as anxious to preserve the game as under other circumstances he is careless about the matter.

I do not accuse landlords or lords of manors of any direct injustice in what they do, for strictly speaking there is none; but I submit, with deference, a somewhat different line of conduct would be the better policy. There

would still be a wide difference, quite sufficient to prevent the approach of anything like the so much dreaded symptom of equality, between the landowner and tenant, inasmuch as was the farmer permitted to shoot my lord would reserve to himself the right to sport over his tenant's grounds, whereas a game certificate would not give the other the shadow of a right to put a foot on his landlord's.

No man can be expected to feel an interest in matters in which he has no interest himself; gratitude, if it has been called forth, or a sense of the duty he owes to society, will deter a commonly honest-minded man from committing an act prejudicial to another and it will further induce him to prevent others doing it. A man would if he could prevent a gang of burglars entering a house and robbing it; he is not jealous or envious of the superior possessions of another, nor does he expect that other to give up a part of those possessions to him. He will

consequently, if opportunity offers, lend his aid to protect them; but he is not called on to put himself out of his way to further the mere amusement or sport of another, which he is not permitted in any way to enjoy himself.

The worst trait I know of in the character of the Sportsman is the thorough inveteracy with which many (I will in courtesy say some) will pursue any man caught in the fact of killing game. Many would take into consideration his having a large family and several of the usual pleas put forth on such occasions had he stolen a sack of wheat worth thirty-five shillings; but the crime of snaring a hare worth three would be held a crime worthy transportation if the laws held it as such; no general character, no family urged as excuse, would in many cases save the delinquent, though in most things, but where game is the object it would in law phrase be held at worst but petty larceny, but recollect it is petty larceny

committed against the wishes of the high and influential. I must say I consider sitting in the pillory or a good flogging would be a quite sufficient punishment for the offence, and would be far more dreaded than the usual punishment. But I suppose our laws must be considered like our Lord's "anointed," immaculate and unimpeachable.

Much has been said and written on the subject of the preservation and, vice versa, on the destruction of foxes; I can easily conceive the anti-fox-hunting community wishing there was not a fox in the country, as a fisher would wish there was not an otter in its streams. Their views of this subject are correct enough so far as the existence of foxes go, irrespective of their being necessary to fox hunting. I am willing to admit they do no known good except destroying a few beetles and creatures of such ilk, and on the other hand, they do destroy game to a certain extent, and poultry pretty

extensively, that is, when they get a chance; I believe they like lamb also, and a sickly helpless one does sometimes fall to their share. Thus, though a foxhunter, I honestly admit all the depredations of which the fox is occasionally guilty, and if the rogue could have his will his love of destruction is so insatiate that he would leave us little game or poultry for our tables; but be it remembered that game have wings, and poultry are at night usually locked up, or at least the door is shut where they roost, lambs, if in health, are usually by their mother's side, and a ewe in defence of her offspring is a serious antagonist to a fox who is not the bold animal some people may think; he is a coward, though shewing recklessness from despair, which is miscalled gameness. When was a fox known to attack a foxhound or even a terrier? True he dies hard when attacked and from despair fights desperately; he is in this only more courageous than the animal who dies without

an effort to save his life. The fox attacks, but unlike the dog, he will not attack where he knows resistance will be shewn, like most wild animals, unless pressed by hunger, he will avoid encounter with anything he cannot come on by surprise and consequent disadvantage. We are all apt to mistake things strangely, we call the fox a game one who has given us a clipping run, he is not game at all, strictly speaking he is a fox of unusually lasting powers, which he very naturally uses as long as he can to escape. It sounds well in describing a run to say, "On "the hounds being thrown in they found at once, "reynard, gallantly going off at the first sound "of a hound's tongue, made straight for Burnham "bushes; here a slight check occurred, but old "Trailler hit him off on the other side, and "away they went at a racing pace to the "Wickers, here, disdaining to try the earths, he "never entered the cover, but leaving it to the "right undauntedly faced the open country,

"making his point apparently for the covers at "Chisholme, these he could not reach, but was "run into near the little village of Coldwatham, "after one of the fastest bursts of the season; "he never changed his point but was killed in "the open, nine miles from Aston Wood where "we found him."

This sounds very fine in favour of Mr. Pug, but if we look at it rightly it is about this; "he went gallantly off," the fact was he was too scared to stay. It may be said some foxes would have stayed and been "badgered" about the cover for half-an-hour, probably, so would the fox in question had he known well the intricacies of the cover in which he was found, if he had not been too much frightened to do so. Again, "disdaining to try the earths he never entered the cover," take my words for it, he neither disdained the earths, the cover, or his pursuers, but made the best of his way for a locality he knew, and where he felt that having

been hitherto safe there he should find safety could he reach it; "he undauntedly faced the open country," the fact is he could not make good his point without doing so, his strength failed him and he was run into. He was, as I have stated, a fox of great speed and natural powers of lasting, but game or courage he gave no proof of, he simply ran away as fast and as long as he could.

I say this with no feeling of contempt for the fox; it matters not from what cause he does it, he affords sport not to be equalled, and that to the highest in the land; this gives him a fair plea for preservation, and not being ignobly made away with by unfair means. I have shown him to be a coward in contradistinction to those who fancy him a bold animal, who will attack things of which he is positively afraid. He now and then gets hold of a rabbit, but they are usually too quick for him, and are snug in

their holes of which it is useless his watching the entrance.

There can be no excuse made for destroying foxes unless there was no fox hunting going on. It is the height of meanness and selfishness. He who takes a few brace of birds or a few hares does it for his bread, or very probably (for I do not wish to uphold him) for his beer; no man would destroy a fox unless he was authorised to do so by those above him, to whose shame be it said, would spoil the sport of a whole country by their meanness, lest they might lose a brace or two of birds, or a few insignificant poultry; this is selfishness in the extreme, for it is not whether Mr. ——— shall lose his hunting or Mrs. ——— her poultry, but whether the one person should be, we will say, inconvenienced, or perhaps a gentleman and nobleman lose their amusement. Suppose twenty brace of birds were killed in a county by foxes, there would be plenty left for

our use and amusement, but destroy half the number of foxes, you devastate a country. I consider the poacher an honest and sociable character when placed by the side of the gentleman authorising the destroying of foxes.

CHAPTER VIII.

We now come to a Sportsman, and I must allow it to be an effort on my part to call him so. The fisher, or fisherman, or angler, let me call him by which name sounds to him the most respectful; for though he does not rank high in my category of legitimate Sportsmen, I still respect the man, respect his pursuit as being a perfectly harmless one, and respect the taste that enables him to find amusement in contemplating the beauties of nature while enjoying his favorite pursuit. Little as I hold the angler as a Sportsman, I always annex the idea of an amiable man to him who makes it his recreation; an impatient man would find it

too trying a school for his temperament; an irritable one would find that by indulgence of his feelings he would realise the saying of "catching no fish;" a morose man would find nothing on which to vent his ill humour, or at least nothing sensible to it; and a depraved one would feel the absence of the world not only irksome but intolerable. In holding the angler as cheap as I do, as a Sportsman, be it observed, I allude to him who dangles for Roach, Perch, and such kind of subordinate fry. I candidly confess that personally nothing short of a whale could rouse my enthusiasm in fishing. This is no matter; others require less excitement. The very term so often used, "the patient angler," "the gentle craft," carry with them a characteristic quite at variance with the habits of one used to pursuits of a more stirring description.

That fishing has its enthusiasts is quite clear from the fact that not only Wales, Ireland, and

Scotland, nay, even Norway, can boast of their visitors in search of sport; but these are the fly-fishers of trout and salmon celebrity, such are of a different stamp to "the patience in a punt" brethren. I hold there to be something aristocratic, nay, elegant, in the art of fly-fishing; the sweep of the rod, the graceful motion of the arm, and scientific pliability of the wrist, are only learned in perfection by the élite of anglers. If in fishing for perch you find your float pulled under water and away from you, you might lay down your rod, go to lunch, return and you would be (barring a casualty) sure of finding Mr. Perch, with your hook firmly fixed, probably, in his stomach; not so the trout, he, if permitted, rushes here and there, showing most inconceivable pranks to extricate himself, which, with a muff, he would probably achieve.

Salmon-fishing is, as I have heard and conceive, a very exciting sport; here you have

something to contend with, something in itself worth the time and trouble of trying for. No doubt much dexterity is required in the capture of a salmon of twenty pounds weight, but where this is not brought forth, succeed or not, there is a kind of "pull devil pull baker" trial between fisher and fish that produces at least fun; it is a fair trial of strength on the one part, and strength combined with dexterity on the other.

I am not in this volume giving any description of Field Sports, but a description of the usual characteristics of Sportsmen; if in my mentioning the Angler my notice of his amusement is neither seductive or correct, I hope he will pardon my little knowledge of the craft, in consideration of my full appreciation of the general character and demeanour of the man.

Some of the best educated and best conducted men I have had the pleasure of knowing have been anglers, and I have sometimes roused their good natured ire, (if I may make use of

such unusual terms) when they found they could not rouse my attention to their description of a beautiful trout they had killed. God help my ignorance, I could see no beauty in one trout over another, and if I had caught one, I should not care one farthing if he was as ugly as an imp, provided he was a trout; so much for my taste and judgment as an angler.

I have now ran through the category of what I termed Legitimate Sportsmen; I trust I have shewn some of them not only as conducing to the amusement of their neighbours and to the country around, but useful in a national point of view. Cynics or the unthinking may dispute this, nay, may ridicule the idea of a sportsman effecting it; I must take leave, however, to remark to such persons that the man who, in any way, directly or indirectly, increases the prosperity of his country, by causing a circulation of money, serves it, in a financial point of view. He who conduces to its amusement,

in promoting harmless pursuits, increases the happiness and consequent content of the influential part of the community. By affording them amusement at home, many are deterred from seeking extraneous amusement abroad. By rendering home agreeable to them they neither wish to make other countries a residence, or to alter the habits of their own. Better this than plotting revolutions. I must consider the great merit of a man's pursuits are whether they are conducive to the gratification of others as well as himself. The collector of old china or coins has his pursuit, but it is a purely selfish one, and the only good it does is to a few dealers in such articles, who are not usually of a class highly to be commended as to their strict adherence to truth or the accuracy of their statements as regards these articles of virtu. He sits in the comparative solitude of his own apartment, looks over his treasures and is only one degree removed from the miser, who does the

same by his gold. What matter whether a man has ten thousand guineas that he counts over, or ten thousand guineas worth of coins that he looks over; society is not amused by his pursuit, or general society, in any way benefitted; such a man lives unloved, and the news of his death is hailed with pleasure by those expecting to be benefitted by it, by those who think there is a possibility of their being so, by indifference by others, and none regret the cutting short of his useless career.

Not so the sportsman and foxhunter, he lives for others as well as for himself, and dies regretted by a county; hundreds have derived their chief amusement from his liberality, hundreds have enjoyed his hospitality; society has everything to cause their wishing him a long life, and the death of the squire is held a calamity to the neighbourhood. Better, far better, I say, would it be to die like the humble whipper-in, Tom Moody, than sneak out of the world like the miser without leaving

a living heart to sorrow at one's loss. Yet let them think as they will, such will ever be the end of the man who lives for himself; one cannot but regret that at his death he will not be able to see, or feel, that many rejoice, but not one sigh is called forth.

There may be, and probably are, those who living for themselves care little or nothing what society may say or think of them after they are gone;—if there be such the sooner they go the better, and are not left "encumbering the earth" they will not "fertilise."

We now come to a class of the Sporting World that I have mentioned as mere *sporting characters*. I hope that, if in this volume I have eulogised those sportsmen whose habits and pursuits I look upon as beneficial to society, it will be found I shall not be too lenient towards those whose habits have a different tendency. Be it, however, borne in mind that there is no amusement or pursuit in life that has not among

those engaged in it, men of (to say the least) equivocal and objectionable character. This of course, says nothing against the pursuit, or those who pursue it properly. The sporting world labours under such disadvantage, so in sooth do even the learned professions, and, I opine, to a pretty considerable extent, trade, of all and every kind, but we have this consolation, if the evil disposed, in either of these, darken its horizon, the well-disposed stand out in bold relief with redoubled lustre.

Under the above head of sporting characters I bring the *stag hunter*. Not in any way meaning by this to mention his name in reprobation, ridicule, or contempt, but simply that I do not hold turning out an animal merely to catch him again, a legitimate sport of the country, neither do I so call turning down a bag fox. To shew that the latter is not so, mention only the name of a "bagman," as having been hunted or to be hunted by a pack of foxhounds, to the master

of those hounds, I will be bound to say he will evince an uneasiness and dissatisfied manner about him, that shews though from some reason he may give his sanction to its being done, he is, as it were, half ashamed of it. There is, however, still this difference between stag-hunting and hunting the bag fox. The stag is sooner or later sure to be retaken, the bag-man is by no means so. Yet even with this, there is something unsatisfactory to the sportsman in killing an animal we had by us a few hours before. It is a feeling somewhat difficult to define, and one which it would be absolutely impossible to make a man, not a sportsman, understand. It is not, however, like finding a wild fox, and killing him. You might, for instance, talk to all eternity to a Frenchman about it, he would only shrug his shoulders and say "je n'en voit pas la difference." By the by Monsieur ridicules our hunting, and I think fox-hunting more than any other. Now if he ridiculed the

act of turning out an animal already in our possession to hunt, however, I might defend the act as intended to produce sport, my conscience could but make me admit he had some reason on his side, but if he can tolerate hunting at all it is stag-hunting. The very size of the animal pleases him and he considers it "une grande chasse."

The stag hunter will never be classed with the fox hunter as a sportsman by sportsmen, let it be observed by the stag hunter I mean the man who hunts with stag hounds, and those hunted under the former system of the Queen's and the old Earl Derby's. He from some cause preferred stag to fox-hunting; a great boon to the Londoners it was his keeping them, and a great boon was it also to the town of Croydon, and very deservedly popular it made Lord Derby. Him we hold as a sportsman, his keeping a pack of hounds be they of what kind they may shew him as such if there had not been other particulars that fully entitled him to be so held.

Masters of Hounds as I have said are all either in reality sportsmen, or if they only keep hounds for the éclât and popularity of the thing, enjoy the "prestige" of being so, the pretensions to the name, in those who merely hunt with the hounds rests quite with themselves. It is so, in some degree, with regard to those who hunt with fox-hounds, but their pretensions, who merely hunt with stag-hounds are at least very equivocal. I must make exception in favour of the gentlemen who hunt with the Devon, kept by Mr. Theobald, they hunt outlying deer, and whether a man finds a wild deer, or a wild fox, the spirit of the thing is nearly the same, and it rests with his taste (or perhaps country) which he makes the object of his pursuit.

I speak of the Devon as they were some years ago, whether any change has taken place since I do not know, but I should say that any change from what they were then, as regards

master, men, or hounds would be very hazardous if done in the hope of improvement.

The stag-hunter I must regard in a general way as a man "of no mark." It would be invidious to add "or likelihood," though I must admit that both terms would be appropriately used to many who go, some for a gallop, others from an affectation of the sportsman, others to show themselves, and, again, others to show their horses; some go for air and exercise, and consequent health, about, I should say, the most sensible reason a man could give for riding with stag hounds when others were to be found within reasonable distance; many go for fun, not one in twenty for hunting, that is, real hunting.

In some proof of what I say, you rarely see a farmer with stag hounds; now they are a class that, where they can afford it, are Sportsmen. In many counties you see a considerable number with fox hounds, in the Holderness

country particularly; but I think I make no mistake in saying change the Holderness hounds for a pack of stag hounds, the farmers would disappear like the swallows. But the Holderness men are the sort all fox hunters should be, shew me the Yorkshire man who is not.

To return to the stag hunter; when I call him a man of "no mark," I allude to such as are to be found with the Queen's. There are frequently many with them that are no more known than they would be if dropped from the clouds. There are men of every sort, every trade, every description. With fox hounds every scarlet coat is the garb of the gentleman, or at least Sportsman, who relies on his being such will be held as entitling him to wear one. But with the Queen's it will be found covering the horse dealer, the lawyer's clerk, or the retailer of cigars, who, as he keeps one horse for an occasional day with the Queen's, keeps also a scarlet coat for the same purpose. These are

the men, if you please, who (as mentioned in the early part of this volume) do ride over the farmer's wheat and break his fences, for they can do it with impunity; they are not known, so compensation is out of the question. The run over, he coolly takes one of his OWN cigars, blows his cloud, seeks the railroad, which blows a still greater cloud, and thus evaporates in smoke; fit ending for such a Sporting character.

In speaking thus lightly of the stag hunter, be it noticed, I have only spoken lightly of him as a Sportsman, not as a man; for, from the Earl of Derby keeping his stag hounds, down to the man of smoke alluded to, so far from doing harm to society, the one did a great deal of good, the other, in his way, if he does a little mischief does good also; he contibutes to the finances of the rail road, to those of the stable keeper where his hunter (save the mark) stands, and to those of the tailor who makes

his memorable "pink;" we will forgive him the damage he occasionally does the farmer on the score of the good he does in the other particulars, so on the whole the balance of good he does is in his favour. "Then why, Mr. Author," he might say, "find fault with me?" I have found no fault with him; I merely say that being no Sportsman he more than probably makes himself ridiculous in attempting to show as one.

We now come to a character on whom I fear I cannot bestow the negative praise of doing no harm and if I say he does any good I must admit he does so in an indirect way and without any intent on his part to do so. Every living man does some in some way, the laudability of so doing consists in the intention, and in the case of the character coming before us, I fear if he actually does not intend injury to any particular individual his pursuit does mischief in carrying it out and still more

by setting a bad example to others. I allude to the Turf man who keeps horses solely for the purpose of making money, and has none of the true feelings of a Sportsman about him, we must call him a sporting man and a racing man, though his practices strike at the very root of fair and legitimate racing, by shewing it as a sport in which the honourable man is made the victim of the unworthy; this is effected by the man who figuratively keeps race horses to win or lose as best suits his book. Now there may be occasionally a race that he is next to certain his horse can win, in such case he backs him, wins his money and his race, he must to carry out his plans win sometimes; or no one would bet on his horses when it is determined they shall lose, and it is very certain that if he can get no money on he can carry none off, which, whether he runs in the hopes of winning or with the certainty of losing, it is his full intention to do.

It is necessary that characters of this sort (unlike the common better we shall look at presently) must be pretty good judges of race horses, both as regards their own and those of other persons; they must be able to pretty accurately measure the capabilities of each or they could never judge where their horses had a fair or all but sure chance of winning, or where he must lose, for they rarely go quite on an uncertainty. Sometimes even these men "get into the hole," but far more frequently put others "in the pot."

This part of the Sporting World do not rank generally as gentlemen, we must blush for those who have hitherto done so, if they ever join in the practices of such a clique, but very properly, if they do thus act, their reign as gentlemen is short; they have then only to show as one of the sort that helps swell the number of mere sporting men. If we separate betting from racing the man who makes losing his game

would not only do no harm but he would, as a matter of necessity stop, for running to lose without betting would be a losing game indeed, and put money in other persons' pockets instead of his own, but as betting must, or at all events, will go on, the character we have in hand is little better than he who plays with loaded dice, that throw high or low as circumstances render it necessary they should do to further the ends of the juggling gamester.

However we may and with reason despise the character, we must, in common charity admit that many have become one of the clique from having been victimised in their earlier career. If the first projector of the system really merits our execrations, the man led or forced into it, we have but to despise and avoid: some of these men are to a certain degree to be pitied. There are doubtless many known rogues on the town, who would cease to be such if opportunity offered, and they possessed the ways

and means of living honestly, not merely on the score of inclination; but it cannot be very pleasant living a life of constant apprehension. So would many of the characters of whom we are speaking, run their horses honestly, if the practices of the turf were such as they could live by so doing. I mention this, that people unused to turf transactions may not be led to paint the arch-fiend himself blacker than he really is. Such men as Lords Eglinton, Zetland, and many others would, of course, run their horses under any circumstances honourably, or they would not run them at all; but be it remembered, to such men, barring the pleasure of seeing a horse of theirs win, the stakes are frequently all but a matter of indifference to them. Their position in life places them, in a great measure, beyond the plots of the black sheep of the turf, and their horses are comparatively with those of many other persons, safe. Now and then it turns out otherwise, but where it does their means of investigation are

so many, and the aid given so great, the perpetrator is usually found out and punished or exposed. Not so the man of small means. He and his horses are constantly subject to the villany of the designing. I am quite aware that large stakes, and great events, call forth far greater attention than minor ones, and far more villainous intentions. But where the owner of a favourite is a high, honourable, and influential man the thing is different, and sometimes impossible to bring off. The *gros jeu* is where the favourite belongs to some man who can be "got at," in other words, tampered with, and not only so, but led into the plans of those ever on the look out for such a chance. When it occurs we may anticipate the havoc it creates. He shares in the plunder, and if he was not one before, from that moment becomes a sporting man, running (figuratively) to win or lose, as best suits his purpose and that of his confederates. They say "dog will not eat dog," we might

therefore infer that both from gratitude, and still more in the prospect of turning such man to account on another occasion, he would be at least safe. No such thing, for "dog *will* eat dog," in racing affairs. His former confederates hold the turning him to account, as they did before when he shared in the booty, but in a different way, so they make all sure by sacrificing him to their own interest in some event where a specious plan is concerted, by which he conceives he is to benefit, but which he finds going the reverse way to that which he anticipated, but they, from the first, intended; he, in turn, is "cleaned out." Can it be a matter of surprise if, smarting under loss and mortification, such man throws honour to the winds, and makes up his mind to pillage friend or foe, if he gets a chance. Thus, as I before said, the character he becomes ought to come in for a share of our pity. He is *made* a rogue by the rascality of others, many of whom, perhaps, have undergone the same ordeal.

This is a frightful state of things in the Sporting World I admit, but not one iota more frightful than the many tricks and temptations by which an originally honest man has been tempted or forced into becoming a rogue in other pursuits in life. The great error is the non-sporting part of the community will hold Sporting as unnecessary; consequently, any transaction or occurrence leading to a result to be deplored and reprobated is magnified tenfold by such persons. They hold banking necessary, therefore, if a nest of rogues ruin hundreds, they admit such firm to merit public and private execration and punishment, but they do not, therefore, decry banking. If a railroad projector also ruins individuals and families, they look at it as a casualty attending such speculations, content themselves with calling Mr. and Messrs. ——— rogues, but the decrying railroads as a general pursuit never enters their heads. "Yes," they may say, "but we cannot

do without banking and railroads, and we can without hunting and racing." My answer would be, "Yes, WE, that is, YOU, could do without hunting and racing, but the country could not; at least it would be a serious loss to it if they did not exist." We find people in this world are apt to consider self as of much greater importance than it usually is, and are also disposed to hold that necessary, commendable, or the reverse, as it strikes them as being so; whereas, we should set self and prejudice aside, and take care to be well-grounded in our subject before we condemn anything as useless because it does not meet our ideas of being needful or beneficial to the community, for we, usually, merely show our own ignorance where we are not so.

We now come to another sporting character —The Better—This man need not, nor does he, usually know anything about race horses, their particular merits, or peculiar attributes. In the

first place, little as he knows about race horses, he knows far too much of racing matters to back horses "on their merits;" a truly dangerous system for any man to go on without he knows the horse well, and in sooth, his master better, that he may know his intentions on the subject; and even then, of course it is a risk, as all racing must be. A man may be perfectly correct in his estimation of the capability of the horse, but it would be very little satisfaction to hear that he OUGHT to have won when he finds he did NOT.

The better goes on the safer tack; he trusts to neither horse or master; he makes his book according to the current odds against the horses engaged. Keeping in mind the amount he may win or lose on each horse, taking care so to bet that win which will if he does not gain he cannot be hurt, but if either of the, to him, right horses win, he pockets something worth having. His book is a kind of debtor and creditor

account with chance, and he usually so arranges it as to leave the balance the right side of the book. If he only did this it would be all well enough, we should have no greater right to find fault with him for availing himself of his superior knowledge in calculating odds, than any other man for calculating the chances in favour of, and against, any speculation he enters on. The better has nothing to do with other persons' books, or with the wisdom or reverse of the bets of those making a book, or not, he offers or takes such odds as suit himself. If they are such as do not suit the bets already made by others it is their folly, not his fault, if they accept them. If a foolish fellow chooses to back a horse that the better has good reasons for having betted against, he deserves to lose his money, nor can we blame the other for winning it. The merchant would not hesitate in buying up a man's stock of hops if he had got certain information that

from some cause or other hops would, in a week or two, rise in the market. He would only be held as a clever man. He virtually does the other out of two hundred or two thousand, the difference between the present price of his hops, and what the other knows by superior information or superior foresight they would be worth in a week hence. The better does no more, so far as betting is concerned. No one finds fault with the merchant, nor in fairness ought they more to blame the better so far as his betting transactions are concerned.

So far the better and the man of business, if they each get a pull in their favour, act wisely, or err (as you please), but taking it either way, their transactions are about on a par. We now come to a line of conduct that places both in a very different position, and subjects either to our unmitigated reprehension.

I believe it will not be denied that measures have been taken by influential men to cause a

rise or fall in the public funds to suit their own especial ends for the time being. Now here the man of influence does not trust to his superior acuteness in judging of the probability of such event, neither does he alone avail himself of superior information; but he by his own acts and those deputed by him, produces an event for the sole purpose of robbing others and profitting himself. He robs the public that he may gain.

In such light stands the better on many occasions, and I can fairly say that rarely has a momentous piece of rascality been brought off in racing matters in which the betting-men (that is a portion of them) were not concerned, or have been, I may add, at the bottom of it. In this, if he does not neutralize, he throws a damp on the efforts of honourable men to support the turf, for it is not to be supposed that owners of race horses will stand a target to be shot at by the envenomed arrows of scoundrels

ever on the watch for such purpose. Here the better stands forth in all his hideousness. But again, not a whit more black than the banker, the railway projector, or the plotter of schemes to influence the funds.

To rescue the better from some of the obloquy thrown on him by the anti-sporting world, let me, in justice to him, bring forward a part of his general conduct in some degree palliative of the infamous part of it. He, in most cases, pays his debts; at least his racing ones. I have frequently heard it observed in the very few cases in which betting may be behindhand in so doing, "How could you think of betting with such a fellow? had you betted with a gentleman I should merely regret your not getting your money, but in this case I must say you are rightly served."

Now, without, for one moment, meaning to impugn the honor of gentlemen, or to assign a superabundancy of it to the better, I must in

candour say gentlemen much more frequently are unable to pay the bets they have lost, or ask for time to do so, than does the betting man. In fact, differing from the observation I have quoted, I would, in a general way, rather (on the score of certainty of payment) have a large bet with a known betting man than with a gentleman; let me repeat I impugn not the honourable intentions of gentlemen, but I go on this principle; the betting man very rarely risks more than he can pay if he loses, gentlemen very frequently do from feeling a certainty of winning. The betting man knows too well the uncertainty of racing to do this. He sometimes bets to an enormous amount and gets "hit hard," but he is too shrewd to risk all; he takes care to have enough behind to keep going while he waits his chance for a hit in his favour. Thus we see on a settling day the betting man coolly paying away his tens, twentys, fiftys, and hundreds as a matter of

course. This strikes the novice with considerable surprise; but it is to be accounted for in the first place from habit, and in the next, though he may be a considerable winner still he must have considerable losings, it is only the proportion the winning bets bear when compared with the losings that constitute the difference between a good book and a bad one. It sometimes happens, when odds change very much near to the coming off of an event, that where at one time a man had so made his bets as to stand to win to a certainty either (say) twenty or five hundred, he is very glad to have the opportunity of so arranging his book as to win and lose hundreds, without the chance of putting a pound in his pocket; this produces the cool way in which he pays and receives money. I think I am not stating what is not the fact, when I say I am convinced I could point out the regular betting man among others, though I was totally unacquainted with his

person. The gentleman who bets, independent of any feeling of depression or elevation consequent on the gains or losses he has experienced, is actuated by gratification or its reverse, by the success or failure of the horse he has backed. If his own this is easy to conceive to be likely to be the case, and he cannot help showing it; if the horse belongs to another he feels his judgment flattered or the reverse by the issue of the event, and he cannot avoid showing this also; consequently you can usually tell by his demeanour whether he has been successful or not. Now all this is unfelt by the better. He knows nothing about the horse, consequently, feels no interest in him, or is jealous of his judgment being impugned, or cares one farthing should he be complimented on being correct. His betting is a business, a trade in which he has no pride but deep interest.

He knows, probably, nothing, and cares as little whether a horse be a fast one, or one

whose only chance is making running, whether short or long distances, light or high weights, suit him the best, he goes on the broad scale of the odds. If, we will say, six to four being against the favourite, he so arranges his book that he bets it once, twice, or twenty times over, as suits his bets against other horses, of whom, probably, he knows little more than they are animals in the race; he only judges of them by the current odds. If the odds change, he does not trouble his head with the why or wherefore, they have changed, whether it arises from such a horse having showed lame, or on the contrary having been so, but now being at work again, is a point he never considers. He changes his book in accordance with what the odds *are*, and hedges or stands his money on in accordance with the present betting and the state of his book. He verifies the old adage, "sufficient for the day, &c., &c."

This makes the very wide difference between the racing man who keeps horses and also bets, and he who is a better only. To him who has a horse in the race it is a matter of vital importance to ascertain WHY the odds have changed if changed they have. To him it is of the first import to know whether it will be a fast run race or not, for this may make all the difference between his having a fair chance of winning, or not the ghost of one. A perfect judgment as regards racing and race horses is as necessary to him as the clear calculation of odds is to the better.

We cannot but regard both of them as faulty characters. But in charity let each be allowed such palliative points as exist in his pursuit. Let not the sporting man be reprobated without mercy, and among a certain set without one to do him justice and to weigh his character fairly. It may be that with his redeeming qualities in one scale and his

faulty ones in the other, possibly the former might "kick the beam," but if a pound weight would make them balance, do not let it be said it would require a ton to effect the purpose. But such is the kind of justice apt to be awarded where a prejudiced class are the weighers, and to no one is this prejudice carried further than in the case of sporting characters.

I must here mention a character that I did not mention in my category of persons to be noticed. I omitted him there considering his vocation as gone, at least publicly so. I mean the betting-list keeper. That I may not be thought to uphold either betting houses or the keepers of them, I am quite willing to admit that it may be, and, in fact, is on the broad scale beneficial to the public that they are stopped. I say this not from the received idea that anything unfair was practised in them, or that they were as I have heard them called, "a trap for the unwary." Nothing could possibly

be more fair than the system, and I shall make certain persons stare when I assert nothing is more honourable than the transactions usually carried on in the business of such places. "Honour!" I think I hear many exclaim, "honour in a betting-list keeper!" Yes, I flinch not from the word honour, which, though it carries with it aristocratic ideas, is in reality nothing more than is met by the plebeian words "fairness of transaction." It is only that in speaking of the nobleman or gentleman courtesy and custom induce us to use the term honour. In speaking of inferior persons we call it honesty or fairness of purpose. It is a distinction without a difference.

CHAPTER IX.

In this volume I am describing the for and against sporting characters. It would require a second, nay, far more, if I were to enter into minute description of their different pursuits and the way they are carried out. Otherwise I could show that, in using the term honour as applied to the betting-list keeper, I am calling in no absurd panegyric on the man, but simply representing his general business to be based on fairness. He does (or rather did) not make the odds; those odds on which the business of his office was guided, were made by others. It is true he might make the odds offered in his office what he pleased, but it was known

(or supposed to be known) by every one going to him what those odds publicly were. If those he offered to give were less, the man going to his office was not obliged or asked to accept them. There was no hocus-pocus, underhand dealing there. There was no occasion for even a word being spoken. There stood the odds against each horse, legibly written on a form in his office. If those were not approved of you had only to walk out, not a word was said to induce you to stop. If on the contrary they met your views you had only to pay your ten shillings more or less, and get your ticket entitling you to a certain sum if the horse or one of the horses you selected won.

Thus, so far as general transactions went, nothing could be fairer. How far the betting-list keeper may have been accessory to inducing certain persons to trust to chance, as a pleasanter mode of making money, (or hoping to make it) than trusting to labour for the

purpose, is quite another affair. Probably he was the indirect means of doing this. So is the gin palace keeper the indirect means of persons getting drunk, but gin palaces are allowed to go on.

There is a little secret attached to this, or (let me correct myself) no secret at all. Gin produces a vast revenue to Government, so the more there is drank in them the more Government gets and the more the public are demoralized. Now, I think we may fairly infer by this that our philanthropic and wise legislators who so promptly put down, in the case of the betting houses, what they conceived was prejudicial to the morals of the people, to which in this case they were so keenly alive, would, as in the case of the gin palaces, had the revenue got a per centage and betting-lists been so numerous as to bring in the same revenue to Government, have let them go on to eternity, leaving the morals of the people to take care of themselves,

as they are beneficently left to do in the case of gin drinking with all its concomitant evils; though theft, murder, and a hundred other enormities are the result of the tempting facility afforded to gin drinkers, no check is put on it. It is true if any one is found in a beastly state of intoxication in the street the police interfere, but, provided a man is in that state that he is enabled to stagger home he is permitted to do so, and, unless the brutality he exhibits there is such as to call for the interference of the law AFTER the brutality is committed, no check is put on his career. No, virtually, gin drinking must be ENCOURAGED, making out the spirit of the line—

"And wretches hang that jurymen may dine."

There are countries where gaming houses pay (or did pay) a certain sum to Government; it is not so here, but as we have no reason to suppose our legislators and

statesmen more astute or more moral than those of other countries, we may fairly presume that if Government profitted by the people gambling they might carry on gambling to their heart's content, or rather discontent, as Hamlet says—

"This the respect that makes calamity of so long life."

This the touchstone that influences our legislators on any question as to the upholding or crushing any public inconvenience. Will either measure be gratifying or profitable to themselves or the Government they represent? On this its existence and encouragement, or, on the other hand, its annihilation is determined on.

The character we have in hand having stood certainly in an equivocal position, was stopped in his career, (and perhaps wisely so); but there are hundreds of characters holding themselves as honest men much worse than

he; if he did that which tempted you to bet, you got a fair chance of winning. Now we will compare him with numbers of the ticketed shop keepers. They might say, and probably would, "I hope you do not rank me with a betting list keeper." "Upon my soul I do not; would you were as honest a man. He gave you a fair chance of winning or losing if you entered his office, you, if you can coax any one into your shop, give him no chance, but on the contrary the certainty of being pillaged, more or less." It may be fairly alleged that it is at the option of the public to enter such shops or not. Was it not equally at the option of persons to enter a betting-list office or not? It was more so. These ticketed shops have mostly some tout to seduce your entry; to do the betting-list keeper justice, he had nothing of the kind. So, take him all in all, I think I am justified in considering him the honester man, or if

the term suits better, by many degrees the least of a rogue. No doubt a man has a right to show one thing in his window marked for sale, then persuade you into buying what he assures you is the same, handed from his shelves, but thirty per cent of less value; we must not interfere, doing so would be interfering with the liberty of the subject. Thus, the saying is a true one, "One man may steal a horse but another must not look over the hedge."

Again the liberty of the subject authorises an empiric daily putting advertisements in our public journals that are known by some to be false representations. For instance, we may see an advertisement headed

"DEAFNESS INSTANTLY CURED!

"Those affected with this calamity will learn with pleasure that Mr. ——— has discovered a remedy perfectly painless in its application, which instantly removes deafness; its effect is as instantaneous as it is miraculous. Thousands who have been deaf for years have had their hearing instantly restored.

"Apply to Mr. ———, Member of the ———."

By such deceptions many a poor man has expended all he has saved, by coming to London in the futile hope of cure, but the majority have been told theirs is a description that the miraculous remedy cannot touch. The aurist instead of being execrated for his deception is lauded for his candonr in stating the inutility of his remedy. No thanks to him; he well knows if he applied it in cases where he knows it would fail (and these cases are perhaps eight in ten) his empiricism would soon get wind, and his deception be exposed. On going to him you may be told that no one could suppose his remedy would cure ALL deafness, no man of sense would believe it; but his advertisement leads any one to suppose it *would*, and all people are not persons of sense. If his advertisement merely stated that in certain descriptions of deafness it had effected a cure, a man would only have (if he could) to ascertain whether his malady was of a kind likely to yield to

the remedy, and all would be fair, but the wording of the advertisement is such as to be disgraceful to any man pretending to be, or being, of the medical profession. Yet these men live in fine houses and are permitted to go on with their deception and no one interferes to contradict their representations, and they carry on there far greater deceptions than any betting list keeper ever practised with impunity.

Enough has been said, I trust, to shew that deceit, imposition, and fraud are permitted, nay, sanctioned in some cases, but are severely punished in others, and the boasted liberty of the subject is held sacred in some instances, but avails little in others. But proceed we with our category.

THE STEEPLE CHASER,

Or rather Steeple Racer. For it begun with something like a chase across country, where provided a man reached a given point first, no matter how he got there, he won. The winning

then depended as much on a man knowing the line of country well, and much more on his horse jumping every description of fence he might find in such line as his rider took him, than on his actual speed. It was an amusement usually got up at the end of the hunting season by gentlemen, thus testing the capabilities of their hunters, and showing their own in riding them. Then the character of the steeple chaser was easily defined. He was in fact a hunting man with a little more love of fun, frolic, and racing speculation than was found in the usual run of fox-hunters, and still less in more quiet hare-hunters. In fact the hunting man of those days usually, more or less, eschewed anything in the shape of racing; it was a considerable time before steeple-chasing became at all popular. Farmers were averse to having their land ridden over, and their fences damaged for a new sport in which they felt neither interest or amusement. For it was not so much by the horses

engaged in the race that any mischief was done, for in that case compensation was sure to be made, but it was by the arrival of horsemen and footmen from all the surrounding country, who came to witness the sport, that havoc was made. The fox-hunter, independent of his own feelings against the thing, was unwilling to encourage what he knew to be unpleasing to the farmer on whose good will so much of his own pursuit depended. So steeple-chasing had few friends.

Under the auspices of such men as the Marquis of Waterford, Lord Howth, Mr. Osbaldeston, Captain Ross, and other known sportsmen, it got a-head, as Jonathan has it. Steeple-chase courses were selected at recognised places. Still as yet it was the pursuit of gentlemen. By degrees other sporting characters crept in; among the first to do so I think I may mention the Messrs. Anderson, Elmore, and others. Up to this point, and some time after, the

character of the steeple-chaser was that of the gentleman and sportsman, or at least that of the highly respectable man and fair sportsman.

It would have been well for steeple chasing and those engaged in it had it stopped here, but no sport on which a bet could be made or any infamous practices introduced would ever be let alone by a certain clique, till they thrust themselves in. Their first object was to make it steeple-racing, not steeple-chasing, for while it remained the latter no betting, beyond a few bets on the horse's known capabilities, could be made; and of this they had no criterion to go by, or would they have trusted to it if they had. Their next object was if possible to get rid of the, to them, fatal practice of gentlemen riding their own horses; they could in no way sway or induce *them* to join in the thousand-and-one tricks they saw might be practised in steeple-chasing. Flags were brought in vogue, they frequently admitted of a wrangle, convenient at

times; and also admitted of a rider going on the wrong side of it, (by mistake, of course), but it lost the race and was one of the ways in which such an event could be brought about without any one being able to accuse a rider of ought but, at the most, carelessness. He rode beautifully and brought his horse in first, what more could man do, or what could be said? Nothing but PAY.

The circular, or whatever shaped course it might be, provided the horses came in where or whereabout they started from, was to the public a great desideratum and improvement certainly, to the better it was far more. He was not disposed to see his jockey ride four miles out of his sight in a race on which he had money depending. How could he tell but that the jock who had agreed with him to lose a race might have his private bets that he won, might have even employed others to get bets against his horse from the very confederate himself,

thus turning the tables on him by winning? Much more unlikely things have come to pass. Now in the circular course he can see a little of what is going on; I say a little for it is but little you can see, so as to be able to any certainty to judge whether a rider rides to win or not.

I once overheard a noble lord say, "I don't know how it is but when I ride my own horses I can win, but when I put ——— up I am next to sure to lose." It was very ungrateful in ———, for, verily, my lord at one time treated him far more as his companion than his jock.

The getting in very light weights was a great stroke of policy in favour of the betting men. In the first place it prevented many gentlemen riding; this in itself was a host in their favour. In the next, it let in a number of horses belonging to themselves or friends, that, so far from being as originally intended

hunters, never saw, perhaps, a hound in their lives. Besides this it created large fields, thus giving the better something to work upon. So long as steeple chases were comprised of hunters this could not be the case, for if, as I stated, the patronisers of steeple chasing were confined to few persons, the horses in any degree fitting to go in them were few also.

To attempt any characteristic of the steeple chaser of 1856 would be impossible, for he is represented by the nobleman down to the veriest low blackleg in existence.

I in no way mean to say by this that I would wish to see steeple chasing put down, it creates a great circulation of money, and so far does good. We have fully seventy recognised places of sport as steeple-chase courses, and nine or ten of these have some two, others three meetings in the year, and somewhere about seven-hundred horses devoted to the business. The amount of stakes, forfeits, &c., alone comprise a vast sum.

Thus, if steeple-racing is to be reprobated on the one hand it is to be commended on the other. People are not compelled to bet, and if any one does so on a steeple-race he is no more to be pitied than is the foolish fellow who exposes his fingers to the flame of a lighted candle. Latterly not one in half-a-dozen comes off without being a preconcerted DO; it must ever be so in cases where the practised leg can carry on his game with small chance of detection. There is a person of a certain description born every hour; while those continue to be born betting on these events will go on, and while it does steeple-racing will go on, and as many other infamous practices do, probably prosper.

I in no way mean to impugn steeple chase riders as being in the ordinary transactions of life one whit less to be trusted than other men, but they have become so habituated to consider steeple races as a mode by which

money is to be made by some trick or other, that they consider that any one they may be engaged in will be so as a thing of course. It is in fact held by them to be, and is, one of the leading characteristics of steeple racing. There is, however, some excuse for such riders, that does not exist as regards their brethren of the flat: the first see the thing constantly done, the latter only occasionally. Steeple chases are not for such large sums as are frequently flat races, consequently, though they get better paid for a mount, win or lose, a winner cannot afford to make his jock the same present as can the winner of a flat race; thus, if a rider of a steeple race can make private bets insuring him fifty for winning or losing, as the case may be, it is a great temptation in cases where he anticipates only receiving twenty, with perhaps a five pounds more if he wins.

A mere rider of steeple races has not the

same standing in the eyes and estimation of the Sporting World as has the rider of flat races; even with the highest attributes as regards his honesty or his riding. He has nothing like the income coming in as has the flat race jockey, consequently, what would be an almost sure temptation to him to be trickey, would be none at all to the other. In almost all situations in life men are influenced much in their conduct by what they gain by going straight and what they should risk losing by an opposite conduct; many a rogue at heart is kept honest in act by the goodness of his situation, and again, by the fear of the law. Now the law cannot touch the rider, ride as he may, and if on the other hand the goodness of his income is not such as to keep him honest, can we in any way wonder if he acts the part of a rogue? It is something like this in every situation in life. We must not consider what it is right or

moral for a man to do, but what it is his interest to do. It may be said, this is an unfavourable view to take of human nature, but it is a true one. I am not writing a system of ethics, but representing men and things as they are, still, we are not to suppose men demons of iniquity, they are alive to both justice and generosity; pay a man well and the generality of them will serve you well, where this is not the case a man will, whether he be a jockey, clerk to a merchant, or employed in any other capacity, feel a pleasure in "throwing you over" if opportunity occurs, even though he may not profit by it. What is to be expected where he does?

I know no more respectable man than an honest jockey, and there are many of them, when we consider the temptations held out and the means he has of sacrificing his employer if he is inclined to do so, where they do not they merit our highest esteem and respect of

character; the more so when we consider they are not usually men enjoying much advantages of education, but on the contrary have usually received little more than the general knowledge a training stable affords, which can tend little towards a high tone of feeling. The chief advantage they do possess, is their being kept as boys from scenes of depravity, it remains with themselves, in after life, to secure or not any advantage education affords; such as do not avail themselves of such advantage, by which we may suppose the mind is, or ought to be, awakened to a sense of propriety of conduct when they evince such, have in them the germ of innate honesty of purpose that reflects on them credit that we cannot always award to those connected with the turf, from whom better things might be expected.

We now come to a character that I regret custom compels me to admit under the name of a sporting one, but for whom, in a general way,

I entertain feelings of the most profound contempt and abhorrence, as I do for every man who profits by entailing suffering on his fellow man or the animal he so undeservedly possesses; this is the "Match Maker against Time."

Let it not be supposed that I have about me that maudlin feeling that would censure every match made against time. A man may have in his own person, or in any animal he possesses, some extraordinary powers of speed or endurance that may enable him to make a bet the performance of which may not only astonish but be held as impossible to be performed, and may reap a rich harvest by the feat without any undue suffering to the performer; but such circumstances are rare.

We all know that many horses can be found to gallop twenty miles within the hour, and that without exhibiting any pitiable symptoms of distress. The Sporting World know this, consequently no large sum would be betted

against such performance; to ensure this he must either get a pony or some cripple of a horse for the purpose, that from size or inferiority seems quite incapable of the performance; or he must increase the distance so much that nothing but an almost or quite dying effort of the animal enables him to perform it. So long as an animal can perform any feat without unmitigated barbarity being exercised, so long will the match-maker increase his task till he is called upon to perform one (probably his last) that nothing short of such suffering as humanity shudders to contemplate, enables him to perform, perhaps a second or two within time, and a minute or two, or hour or two, as the case may be, before death in mercy relieves him of a master possessing feelings that justly render him execrated by any one with an attribute worthy the name of man.

It is not for me to speak disrespectfully of our laws, but they, in one particular,

strike me as strangely defective, for be it recollected what may be termed a merciful law as regards the culprit, is diametrically the reverse as relates to society who are open to his malpractices. This defect consists in making a fixed and known penalty the consequence of a given offence. We will suppose the punishment of any public offence is imprisonment, it is true that imprisonment may be curtailed or extended to any degree between fixed periods, say one month or six; a man has only to make up his mind whether the gratification or profits of committing the offence weigh more or less than the punishment, he knows he can but get the six months let the worst come to the worst, he chooses the alternative; this I cannot but think should not be.

I am very far from meaning that I consider the award of punishment should be left to any judge whose peculiarity of feeling, or ideas, might make him at times unjust; his sentence

might in some cases be too lenient, in others too severe, but such sentence as the united opinion of twelve unprejudiced men might hold as a fitting one, would mostly be a just one, and that award should not be limited. A man should not be able as it were to compound with his destiny by knowing that any period was the fixed term of his punishment.

I have been led into this digression from having seen, in various instances, the inefficiency of the laws in suppressing cruelty to animals. A man has only to calculate the highest penalty the law allows in such cases, and he may commit any atrocity his interests or brutal disposition suggests, throw the fine, which may not be a matter of moment to him, on the table, and laugh at laws that cannot harm him; for, be it recollected, the fine is made nearly the same on the man who could pay hundreds as on him who goes to goal because he cannot pay five pounds. This is in itself gross injustice. It is true

there should be the same law for the rich as for the poor, and vice versa; that is to say if fine is the punishment for cruelty to animals or women, so let it be; but the quantum of fine should not be the same, otherwise the poor subject themselves to punishment and the rich do not. An ad valoram fine in accordance with a man's circumstances would be a just law, but as the thing now stands it is a flagrantly unjust one, and we have many of which the same may be said, and ever shall have so long as fixed punishments are in use.

But to return to Matches against Time; any match as regards speed only is, if fairly carried out, unobjectionable to the public as regards their effects, and equally so on the part of the animal on the score of suffering. An uncommonly fast horse will trot his mile considerably under the three minutes with just as much ease to himself as the one who requires nearly four to do the same distance. It is the trial

of endurance, combined with comparative speed, (for the distance) that produces such deplorable suffering as is too often put in practice. Here is an instance in which fixed punishments and limited fine act so prejudicially to public justice. I know it will be said the law holds it improbable that a man will injure his own animal; we find, however, that he will, and his own wife too. He will do the first if the gain exceeds the value of the animal; the second if the fear of the punishment usually awarded is not so much to be dreaded as his brutal nature deems the gratification of his ferocity more than equivalent to. But if he did not know whether the fine would be five pounds or five-hundred; or in the other case, whether the term of imprisonment with hard labour would be three months or three years, he would be careful not to incur a penalty of which he did not know the extent.

I know the public feeling or opinion too

well not to be aware that the robberies often perpetrated in matches against time weigh much more in the deprecating such transactions than does any detestation of the suffering of the animals called upon to perform them. I am aware this is paying a bad compliment to human nature, it is nevertheless true, and I suppose is the same all over the world. Byron found it the same in that fair clime,

"Where all, save the spirit of man, is divine."

Can we then expect here that men will forego their interest from any cause but the fear of the law; if we make that such as not to deter them, we virtually encourage them.

The objection raised as to matches against time so often ending in robbery is true enough, but the money laid on such events is not usually sufficient to render them on this account a matter of serious import to society; again, matches against time are comparatively few in the year.

Where a match is made with the intention of its being won is where the feat appears next to impossible to be done. In this case a considerable sum is to be "got on" against the performance, these are the atrocities, in the shape of cruelty, that I so detest; for where, as in such cases, the money to be won far exceeds the value of the animal to perform it, we may guess no species of barbarity will be spared to make him do it. If on the other hand the match is such as the Sporting World consider the horse is quite capable of, they will, if they fancy they can trust the owner, of course bet on it, but he most probably shows how far he was to be trusted by losing it; but it is seldom this *take in* is practised on the betting fraternity, they are too wary to trust to the intentions of those making the match, and it is only a chosen few that are in the real secret and share in the spoils.

To the credit of gentlemen, they are very

rarely found mixed up in these affairs, still less do they patronise them, and I consider it a high enconium to be passed on genuine Sportsmen with truth, that in ninety-nine cases in a hundred they totally set their face against them. We must, therefore, look for the habitual match maker against time among low horse dealers, scouted by respectable men in the trade; low blacklegs, not countenanced by the best of the betting men; in short, a fellow who is rarely seen where respectable men are to be found, and only emerging from his unknown haunts when coming before the public to perpetrate his detestable practices.

CHAPTER X.

We will now look at the characteristic of another match maker against time, but of a far different sort, for, if he makes such matches, it is his own powers he taxes.—The Pedestrian.—Pedestrian matches have not only been patronised by, but performed by, men of all classes; from those for whose character we feel every possible respect down to those entitled to a very small share of it; from Captain Barclay, Walking Powell, Captain Fearman, and many other gentlemen, to the humble competitor for prizes at the (late) Flora Gardens, Bayswater, or Copenhagen Fields. We have them in point of attribute from Curley the Flying Brighton

Shepherd to the plodding, persevering, walker of seventy miles a day, for so many successive days; the one is distinguished as a runner, the other as a walker, but both feats come under the head of pedestrianism. Again, there are some men, such as Charles Westall, both runners and walkers; it is rare, however, that we find them, as in his case, pre-eminent at both feats.

I know of nothing that can be alleged against the exertions of the runner or walker; its practice is perfectly harmless, indeed it would be well both for the health and utility of mankind if the exhibition of pedestrianism raised a feeling of emulation among them to imitate such examples of manly exertion. To show how little prone men are to exertion, consequently how little they know of their own powers or those of other men, when Captain Barclay walked his match of a thousand miles in a thousand successive hours all England was

in astonishment. No one would wish to underrate the feat, it was an extraordinary proof of stamina and perseverance, but time has shewn that since the year 1808, in which Captain Barclay performed the feat, we have become enlightened on the subject, and have found what was at the time unprecedented has been done by others, and far outdone by several; even women have shewn truly astonishing pedestrian powers.

I am quite aware that in these days the power of being able to walk sixty miles would be useless, the time lost, and the money expended on the road would be far better spent in paying five shillings, for which sum a man can be conveyed the sixty miles in a little more than two hours; this has done away with any necessity of a man accustoming himself to walk long distances.

It was different in the times when a celebrated pedestrian coming up to a coach,

halting to give the horses "a mouthful of hay and drop of water" between the stages, was asked by the coachman if he would like to ride, "No thank you," said the man, "I'm in a hurry;" he proved the truth of his remark by arriving at his place of destination before the coach.

I am sorry to say the encouragement that has been given to pedestrian matches has received its fatal check from the same cause that effects the pursuit of the sportsman in other things, namely, the influence of those who bet on every thing that will afford the facility of a bet. It is quite certain that the better on "The Flying Tailor" is quite a different man from the better on "The Flying Dutchman," that is his appearance, manners, and finances differ from those of the other, but it will be found the animus is the same. The clique like flies swarm everywhere, they defile our venison and they defile our sugar,

if they can get at either; so do the betting men by some manœuvre or other influence the winning or losing of the horse or man if they can get at either.

I grant it is poor encouragement to a man to support a pedestrian if after having paid the expenses of a man's support and training, having matched him either against another or against time, either of which he knows he can win, he finds himself "thrown over." This I am sorry to say has been too often found to be the case; the man is an unprincipled fellow no doubt, but less so than the scoundrel who tempts him. Runners and pedestrians are mostly poor, earning a precarious living, feasting for one month and starving the next; it can therefore be matter of no surprise that they are open to temptation. If we could by any possibility do away with the receivers of stolen property we should have few thieves; if we could, in like manner, do away with these

tempters horses and men would run on and win by their merits; but this can never be the case, so all we can do is to keep horse and man under our eye (if we can) and let no one approach either.

That there is not the same watchfulness exercised or expense gone to in order to get at a man engaged in a match that there is to get at a horse engaged in the Derby must be held as a matter of course, but the money to be made by influencing the man may be as much to the one man as that to be gained by the other, if he can hocus the horse, may be to him, so each in their way are on the alert to do either.

If on the one hand I hold pedestrianism as doing little public harm, I am quite prepared to admit it does as little public good. It is as yet principally confined to known public runners and walkers, and while it is so can be of no benefit to society at large.

Now I am quite satisfied that if there was a day or two in the year, or even oftener, appointed in every large village in England, with some little prizes to be run for, and a trifle entrance for each man, it would not only create amusement to the inhabitants, but it would have an effect that possibly may not strike the casual reader. I will show, or attempt to show, what I mean by analogy.

Some twenty years since the owners of cart horses were content with seeing them do their work, whatever it might be, at the rate of three miles an hour at their quickest; it mattered little whether at plough, drawing a waggon with two tons on it or drawing that waggon empty, they varied but little as to pace. It would at that time have been held highly prejudicial to the animal to hurry him; in fact from long habit they were all but incapable of accelerated motion. The men who went with them were the same; capable or incapable both

man and horse were at all events quite unwilling to change their habits. To have put a cart horse into a trot in those days would have been held the act of one demented. It was supposed to be as unnatural a pace for the cart horse as I can conceive a canter would be to the hippopotamus. We have, however, found (thanks to the Belgian farmer) that the cart horse can trot, and so far from sufferiug from it is in better health, better wind, and more capable of strong exertion than he was when in a state of his former obesity and consequent plethora. The farmer benefits by increased activity in the horse, and the animal does his work sooner, and more of it, with no more fatigue to himself than when labouring at his former pace.

Having stated this analogetical circumstance, we will see how far foot races would benefit men. Of course there are some, nay, many countrymen of such imperturbable habit that it

would be difficult to rouse them into action to which they have been unaccustomed; still there are in all villages some of more active habits than the rest. These would engage in such sports, and probably the more lethargic would be stimulated by emulation, and seeing another carry off the prize; but I would do far better than this. Young boys are easily excited, and as we have for colts, so I would have races for boys, under and over certain ages—say fourteen. These races would bring up the young ones in active habits, by preparing themselves for the coming contests; and by the time they grew into men they would, more or less, become good runners or walkers. Far better this than frequenting the ale-house to see nine-pins or skittles played. Such races, and the preparation for them, would produce alacrity in the youth and aid in producing a race of active young men, instead of the usual plodding clodhopper we witness in most men who hitherto have had no induce-

ment to alter their slow habits. A countryman with his present habits is unfitted for any purpose but the one he is at, should even necessity, convenience, or interest point out to him some other, and he ever remains the inactive, ignorant lout we see him—unless, indeed, he enlists, then we find that though his slow habits render it a work of time he can be figuratively like the cart horse, be made to trot, and a very different animal both man and beast show themselves to what they were with their former habits. A healthy, active, lively young fellow from the country would be available, nay, sought for, for many purposes to which he is now unfit. We find he is to be made this as a soldier, from coercion, he might be made so from inclination and habit, if temptation in the shape of amusement, emulation, and reward were held out to him. It may be said there is cricket if he wishes to engage in active amusement; granted there is so, but Hodge is not to be roused from

his inactivity by mere amusement where no reward tempts him to exertion. So, as Hamlet says, "The play's the thing;" and I am quite sure periodical foot races would be found highly conducive to active habits in the countryman, for, though it is not a matter of consequence his becoming a runner or walker, seducing him into becoming more or less either would get him into quicker habits in everything he did. Pedestrianism might thus be made the means of most beneficial improvement in the habits of a class now only one step in activity of person and mind beyond the quadrupeds they labour with.

THE PIGEON OR WAGER SHOT.

I treated at such length on the nature and character of this sport in a book I published three years since, under the title of "Bipeds and Quadrupeds," that it would be useless tautology to make any lengthened remarks on it here, independently of this volume confining

itself as much as possible to the characteristics of men, and describing the sports they engage in no further than is absolutely necessary to the carrying out its object.

THE MATCH SHOT

cannot boast of his being of any public utility to any one but the publican, at whose house and grounds such matches usually come off. There are doubtless a few gentlemen who engage in such exploits, but it can never be a gentlemanly pursuit under its present auspices. Can it be otherwise? A sport where twenty or thirty somewhat equivocal characters, taking them generally, meet, have an idle day of it, and finish by a dinner or supper, as the case may be, at a public house, must ever render it, while this exists, an unfit amusement for a gentleman. It is not sufficiently widely spread in its attractions or accommodations to make it an amusement for the public; it is too exclusive; not exclusive in a right way, but exclusive as

being only an amusement for a certain set, namely, chiefly the publican, his friends, and patrons, consequently as a national sport quite a useless one. We have pigeon shots and match shots from the gentleman to the pugilist, and verily about as many of the one as the other, with intermediate grades of all sorts and avocations, it is moreover a kind of snap-shooting, the practice of which is of little benefit to the legitimate sportsman. It is to be tolerated because I am not aware of its doing any ostensible or actual harm, but I should say not encouraged as it does no decided good. In some proof of its not being held in high estimation there are not, that I am aware of, any clubs now existing among gentlemen for the purpose of patronising it; I can call to mind but one nobleman whose name was known as a patron of pigeon shooting, there were then also some gentlemen whose countenancing it boded its rising in the estimation of the

Sporting World. I speak of about twenty-five years since, but it was not found attractive enough to meet the ideas of the sportsman, and failing in this it retrogaded in the estimation of gentlemen, without the patronage of whom no sport can flourish. I should say its day is gone.

THE COCK PIT.

I merely notice the patronisers of this sport as forming a part of the Sporting World. To the credit of that world and of humanity they now form but a very small part of it. Its having been a royal sport and a cock pit having been permitted to add the term royal to its designation only shows the perverted taste of that era, it in no shape elevates the sport though it lowers the taste of the times; the Earl of Derby, if I mistake not, was about the last who patronised this totally useless sport, useless in every sense of the word. If, like racing or hunting, it improved and encouraged a superior class of animal, be it

merely a fowl, it would have its utility, but the most enthusiastic of its advocates never pretended it did this, and if the Earl of Derby was alive now with Gillever and Potter, the most celebrated feeders and breeders of game-cocks ever known, at his elbow, all they could aver would be that game-cocks bred and fed by them were the most pugnacious cocks living and the most victorious in the pit, qualifications in no way rendering the bird more valuable, serviceable, or of greater use to the community. I do not infer that the cock-fighter must necessarily be a man devoid of feeling, but say what you will of it, it was a perverted taste finding amusement in its pursuit, and one I can but regret being forced to record as having been ever that of the sportsman and gentleman; as it no longer remains a recognised sport let us hope that as we progress in civilization there is little chance of the cock-fighter ever again shewing as a member of the Sporting World.

I have, greatly to my chagrin, got among a set of characters that my pen moves unwillingly in describing; but as I fear if we were to scrutinize the habits, tastes, and pursuits of those forming fractional parts of the integral of the great world, we should find ourselves about at the same point. Why should I shrink from exposing the ill-doings of certain parts of the sporting world, while in many of its phases I can glory in bringing out characters that I trust I have shewn are not only the admired of, but by their doings are benefactors to, their fellow men. With this cheering reflection I resume my task, and come to that almost indescribable class, and the lowest in my category.

CHAPTER XI.

The dissecting the different characters of these small fry of the sporting world is not quite so easy as many persons may imagine; the characters are so varied that all that can be done is to hit on as nearly as we can the general description of person representing the different individuals forming the majority of those representing each class. We have not in this case to mention the name of the noble down to the humblest (or in sooth the least respectable of plebeians), but we have now to do with occasionally a man entitled to our respect, and who it would be far better if his name was unrecognised in such places, down to the lowest

characters of the metropolis, for each are to be found among the patrons of, or actors in, the Fancy.

The non-initiated may be at a loss to know of what or whom the Fancy consists. It is comprised of the dog fighter, badger and bear baiter, frequenters of the rat pit, and the pugilistic ring. We will take them each in his turn, and without describing any of them with bitterness, will, to the best of our judgment, "nothing extenuate or set down aught in malice."

We will commence with the dog fighter, a character that has no excuse for his pursuit, but a great deal to reprobate. I am far from expecting that all a man's pursuits should be useful or beneficial to society, for in that case we might disapprove of his playing whist, billiards, or tenis; all we have any right to expect is that his pursuits are neither baneful to any one, cruel to any animal engaged in them, and not prejudicial in the shape of example to society;

whether they may be the pursuit of the sensible or refined man is quite another affair, as is whether they exhibit a good taste or a perverted one, in him who mixes in such. There must be amusement for the low as well as the high; but I quite repudiate the idea that it is in any way necessary or ought to be tolerated, that there should be such for the dissolute and depraved; among such we must place the dog fighter. We have had a few men unequivocally in point of birth, education, and the society they mixed with, gentlemen who patronised this useless and revolting sport. I omit in compliment to the characters to mention their names, we have none who are publicly known as such now.

Reader, have you ever in Hyde or the Green Park noticed some man with a bladder at the end of a string, and that string fixed to the end of a rod like a fishing one, casting this bladder from side to side, and a dog vainly attempting

to catch the bladder which, on his approaching, is jerked to the other side, thus rendering his attempts fruitless. Or have you noticed some man with a cricket ball throwing it as far as he could, and a dog pursuing its flight at full speed, and having picked it up bringing it to the thrower to be again thrown and again pursued. If you have, these are dog fighters training their dogs, so far as wind and bodily exertion goes, in preparation for some coming dog fight; they are thus training their own dog, or the dog of some one who has not time, inclination, or the requisite knowledge to do it themselves; for in a regular dog fighting match it is as necessary for a dog to be in the finest state of wind the animal can be brought to, as it is for the race horse. Such men are usually characters who get their bread, or at least a part of it, by training dogs, fighting them, and keeping them for sale; many of them of a class that add to their

finances by means I shall not enter into here, being totally in their nature, out of sporting events.

It would be folly to wonder at, as it would be useless to personally censure, the very low for being excited and amused at such exhibitions, but that any one approximating to the character of a gentleman, or being in other respects a respectable man, can feel gratification in mixing in them can but create in others unmitigated disgust and contempt.

It is to be regretted that many very young men, not mind ye sportsmen, but aiming at the prestige of a sporting character, are often seen in such places, and who pique themselves on being on intimate terms with Jack so and so, or Bill such an one, from these characters being known as first-rate in the fancy. I do not say that such pursuit, like gaming, is sure to lead to ruin, but it plants the germ of low pursuits in the mind instead of commendable

ones, is sure to lead more or less to demoralization of character, low association, and considerable expense. A young man thus circumstanced is certain to be more or less pillaged in various ways, for he will find it next to impossible to rid himself of such acquaintance, they will not be shook off, and will be found on any pretended loss to make constant inroads on his purse through the medium of his pride as a sporting character, or his humanity; we will say little of their cheating him in their representations of the stated qualifications of any dog they sell him, or their misleading as to the results of any match they may make for him, all this perhaps a few pounds would pay, but the perversion of his habits and ideas no money can pay for; our only hope is that he will early see his error. I do not mean to say that it would amount to any thing like proof, but if I met a young man with a couple of bull dogs or distinctly bull terriers

following him, I should set him down as at best equivocal as to pursuit if not of character; but let me see him with a bull dog in one of their collars and slip with its brass ornaments, I should set him down as far gone beyond redemption. Bear and Badger Baiters, the better taste of the present times, aided by the laws, have, I think and trust, totally put down, or at least their brutal pursuits if carried on at all are done so very rarely and so secretly as not to obtrude on the public eye. If the dogfighter is still a knowing low blackguard, the bear and badger baiter was a hardened ferocious character, bearing about him the indication of his brutal habits, but he is gone and let us hope we

"Shall not look upon his like again."

THE RAT PIT.

We must feel it a relief to turn from characters that have called forth feelings of reprehension

and disgust and to touch on something that we can contemplate if not with approbation at least with palliative features in its favour. It may not be, in fact is not, what the true sportsman either patronises or sanctions, still it is unattended with any direct cruelty, and moreover tends to encourage a very useful breed of vermin killing dogs. Every dog I know of is useful, in his way, but the bull dog; he is quite useless for any purpose but one very properly put down, bull baiting; he is a bad watch dog; is not to be trusted loose among cattle, or indeed any animal; yet with this, though he would fight without flinching till he died, many other dogs would tear him to pieces, this arises from the formation of his mouth, it is constituted to hold not punish by the infliction of a severe bite; he is in temper and disposition the most unaccountable of animals, many of them good tempered as a spaniel and affectionate in disposition, but a

sudden fracas of any sort among animals or men, a natural kind of impulse they have to seize is roused and they will fasten on the first object that strikes their attention, and their grip is that of a vice. It is quite a mistake to suppose the bull dog an ugly animal, if highly and carefully bred and of a favourable colour (say white) he is a symmetrically made and prettily turned animal, and his countenance, instead of being as many are forbidding, is bland and handsome, but he is never to be trusted. But let us return to the rat pit in which the bull dog would be perfectly useless; a small five-pound white terrier would kill ten rats while the other was holding and squeezing one. To the credit of the rat pit its patronisers are not only particular as regards the merits of their dogs but they pay great attention to the breeding of them handsome, and many a smooth-haired little fellow, a pet for a lady, will, when turned into the

pit with twenty rats all huddled in a heap in one corner, which they usually are, thrust his head among them, dealing death in every direction, and not stopping while a rat moves; thus the breeding a very useful little animal is encouraged, nor can we call the killing the rats cruel, for whether their death is brought about by a blow from a stick or a bite from a dog it is pretty much the same thing, and far more merciful than setting a trap in which the poor brute is caught at perhaps ten at night and left in agony with a crushed limb till morning, when some kind of death awaits him. The amateurs of the rat pit of course comprise a variety of characters, from the gentleman down to the stable helper; when the first is seen there it is usually to have some dog tried of whose pretensions he has reason to think highly, but many most respectable characters are frequent or constant in their attendance there, and to the credit of the owners of such

places, on the nights of exhibition a proper decorum is observed by those assembled there, and enforced by the owner of the house if it is a repectable one and in a respectable situation.

We now get on very debateable ground. I do not allude to the parties usually engaged in such matters, but to the difference of opinion on such subjects, and those whose avocation is principally confined to it. I now allude to pugilists and pugilistic encounters.

In most of the acts of men much may be said for and against them; few are so conspicuously laudable that they do not admit of some objectionable point or other, and few are to our comfort so black as not to have some palliative circumstances, some redeeming point to lessen the enormity of their perpetration.

Among many men of non-sporting propensity, and indeed among some who are sportsmen, the pugilist is set down as a ruffian without one of

the softer feelings that actuate the general conduct of mankind. This is error founded not on what they know, or have seen, but what they conceive must be, from the nature of the pursuit the man occasionally engages in. If we reflect the pugilist must be allowed generally to be free from the three most despicable feelings and acts of which man is capable; namely, cruelty, treachery, and taking advantage of the helpless state of his fel'ow man. Perhaps, of all men, the pugilist is the least actuated by either of these detestable vices. The ideas his pursuit engenders, those promoted both by example and the conduct of his associates tend to the same purpose, and he holds a man guilty of either in sovereign contempt. As relates to the pugilist possessing a greater share of courage than other men, he in some cases most unquestionably does; he fears no man. This creates a manliness of bearing and conduct that renders it unnecessary as well as unthought of in him the taking

any man at disadvantage, he has neither the treachery of the Spaniard or the wiliness of the Italian; if you offend him he knocks you down. If he does not do this at the time you are perfectly safe; he watches no opportunity to avenge his cause without exposing his own person to harm or hurt; surely this is a fine feeling as from man to man. Much has been said as regards the pugilist being more fitted for a soldier than other men; so far as not fearing facing any man of any country, however artificially or naturally ferocious in appearance, he certainly is so. But the soldier is so perfectly a machine of art, acting *en masse*, that the manly feelings and bearing of the pugilist stands him in little stead; the danger is different; he has as a soldier no individual powers of resistance; the veriest coward and the bravest heart march mechanically side by side; and the only advantage the brave spirit has is he feels undismayed where the other is half frightened

to death before the bullet reaches him. Thus, though I do not urge as many do that the attributes of the prize fighter render him more available as a soldier than other men, still it must be allowed that the man of fearless manly habit is a very superior being to his reverse, for more or less he will show in all he does. It actuates the disposition as well as the person, and I say without hesitation that the same straightforward feeling that causes the exhibition of manly conduct, that calls forth our approbation and admiration, actuates the mind also.

I believe I have now gone through the principal characters that compose the Sporting World. As most men have some reason for commencing a volume on any subject I state those which actuated me on commencing this.

Certain observations falling from a person in company and corroborated by others present of the same clique reprehensive of Sportsmen induced me to reflect on the circumstance, and

to consider why persons who I was quite aware could not know the characteristics of those whose conduct and pursuits they thus unanimously censured should thus find cause for such decided dislike and censure, I felt they could have no just cause for either; it then struck me that this total ignorance, as regarded the persons and pursuits they vilified, was the very circumstance that occasioned it, and I determined, so far as my humble efforts could effect it, to remove false conceptions and produce a more wholesome feeling in quarters where I trusted ignorance, but not malice or wilful illiberality, caused the fostering and promulgating opinions that I regretted to find were entertained.

I am quite aware that the feelings or opinions of such persons as those to whom I allude can in no way affect the sportsman or his pursuits, that they must be in fact, to a certain extent, a matter of perfect indifference to him; he

would certainly never enter into the one or probably hear of the other, and if he did the result would be an estimation by no means flattering to the parties from whom they emanated; still every well regulated mind would wish to stand well with all classes of his fellow men, except the base, and as I in no way hold many of the parties I have âlluded to as being of that character though in error on certain points, I thought if any efforts of my pen could set such errors right my time would be beneficially employed.

I hope that if I have placed the character of the true sportsman in that fair light in which I am quite convinced it has a right to stand, if I have shewn that his pursuits are beneficial to mankind, and if, in addition to this, his usual conduct and avocations as a man have a beneficial influence in the sphere of their action, I have been found to reprobate sporting and sporting men in no measured terms where

I am convinced either call for such reprehension, thus showing that I am quite as indifferent as regards the opinion of that part of the Sporting World as I am to the opinion of any other class of men whose conduct calls for censure. I trust, however, that as regards the latter I have done even them justice by bringing forward any palliative or redeeming clause in their favour, and thus giving them the advantage of it in the estimation of their fellow men.

If my reader has thus found me fair and just towards those I reprobate, and joins me, which I am quite sure he will, in giving me credit for not saying anything of such characters that they do not deserve, is it too much to hope that he will on the other hand give me the same credit as to what I have said when eulogising the character of the true sportsman.

And now, in conclusion, though I trust I am no egotist, no partial judge of my own conduct, and still less, let me hope, of my own

pretensions in any way, and as unwilling to obtrude any observations on self, on the time or patience of my reader, I think I am entitled, in my own case, to avail myself of that which I have shewn to others, namely fair play.

It will naturally strike the reader that in depicting the characteristics of such parts of the sporting world as I have mentioned in terms of reprehension, I must at some time have mixed more or less with them and their pursuits. I will make "a clean breast" of it, I have. But as a man going once to see a felon hung in no way shews him one intending to mix with and adopt practices that may bring him to be hung also; so seeing enough of sporting in all its phases to render a man *au fait* of the general character of those practising such pursuits, let me hope will not lead to the inference that he must necessarily be ONE OF THEM. Curiosity and a determination to see ALL connected with the Sporting World may induce a

man to see things at which his nature revolts, and having made himself master of all he wishes to see or know, he may then quit the scene, determined never to revisit it. Let me implore my reader to give me credit for having done this at a very early period.

I trust that in all I have written I have shewn myself a strong advocate for humanity to animals, and one who admits of no excuse for causing them undue suffering in promoting either our gratification or interest; I hope therefore I shall not be thought as departing from this fixed principle when I state, that in sporting the excitement is so great, and the enthusiasm so predominating, that sportsmen have had cases occur that apparently gave the non-sporting world a handle (if I may use the expression) to hold firmly by while fulminating their accusations of wanton cruelty on the sportsman's part. They read of occasionally (and do not forget it) that a favourite hunter

died after a severe run with the —— foxhounds. I can fancy I hear them say, "A great favourite he must have been to be treated thus," or some such sarcastic expression. I should be the first to abhor the savage who would, as the term goes, "ride his horse to death," or brutalize a tired a horse to see the finish of the most exciting run that hounds ever went; nor is it to be inferred that such conduct is common among sportsmen. Let me assure those who do not know as much of horses as myself that such casualty, as the one mentioned, may occur without the horse having shewn any previous symptoms of particular distress. When such catastrophe occurs, which it sometimes does after the horse has got home, it usually proceeds from the after effects of exertion; nor is it any sure indication of the animal having suffered, or having been improperly ridden during the run. When it occurs during a chase it is usually from some of the internal machinery of

the animal giving way, probably with little pain, possibly without any. The spirit of horse or man is sometimes stronger than the constitution, and we frequently hear of the latter dying of fever produced by over-exertion or by the breaking a blood-vessel at the time. Thus as the man occasionally voluntarily undergoes exertion that ends fatally, we are not to set it down as a data that a horse has been cruelly treated, to whom such casualty may occur. I am quite willing to admit that some men may become so excited as not to attend to certain indications of distress in a very high couraged horse, and may permit him to exert himself to a degree that ends fatally; and for the credit of humanity we will conclude that after-reflection tells them a tale they cannot but regret, it tells them at least of thoughtlessness, carelessness, and very probably of the false feeling of not being out-done, all to be excused (though most certainly not commended) where no cruelty was intended or willingly perpetrated.

A minor kind of enthusiasm frequently induces men, particularly young ones, to patronise and mix in scenes (sports as they are called) that cannot be justified, and the hope of making money or the wish to enjoy the prestige of being held a sporting man may induce them to associate with characters quite at variance with that of the Sportsman. Will such misguided persons permit one who has seen much to tell them that such conduct and pursuits will exclude them from the notice of Sportsmen, and at best can but procure for them the very undesirable and purchased civility of the lowest characters of the Sporting World.